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THE LIVES

OF THE MOST

EMINENT BRITISH PAINTERS

BY ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

REVISED EDITION.

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ANNOTATED AND CONTINUED TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY MRS. CHARLES HEATON.

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LIVES

OF

THE BRITISH PAINTERS.

GEORGE MORLAND.

GEORGE MORLAND, the eldest son of Henry Robert Morland, was born in the Haymarket, London, on the 26th of June, 1763. He came of a race of painters. He was lineally descended from Sir Samuel Morland, an eminent mathematician and artist; his grandfather was a painter, and lived in the lower side of St. James's Square;[1] and his father, after the failure of some extensive speculations, which all his biographers have alluded to, but left undescribed, followed the same profession, and painted, drew, and dealt in pictures with such indifferent success, that he became bankrupt, and was compelled to bring up his family of three sons and two daughters in indigence and obscurity.

It is said that the elder Morland sought to repair his broken fortunes by the talents of his son George—who, almost as soon as he escaped from the cradle, took to the pencil and crayon, and showed that he inherited art the natural way. The indications of early talent in others are nothing compared to his. At four, five, and six years of age he made drawings worthy of ranking him among the common race of students; the praise bestowed on

[1] Several of the grandfather's works have been engraved, such as "The Pretty Ballad Singer," "The Fair Nun Unmasked," 1769, "The Oyster Woman." He died some time after 1789.

these by the Society of Artists, to whom they were exhibited, and the money which collectors were willing to pay for the works of this new wonder, induced his father to urge him onward in his studies—and his progress was rapid. But it is a dangerous thing to overtask either the mind or the body at these years, and there is every reason to believe that young Morland suffered both of these evils. His father stimulated him by praise and by indulgences at the table, and to ensure his continuance at his allotted tasks, shut him up in a garret, and excluded him from free air, which strengthens the body, and from education—that free air which nourishes the mind. His stated work for a time was making drawings from pictures and from plaster casts, which his father carried out and sold; but as he increased in skill, he chose his subjects from popular songs and ballads, such as "Young Roger came tapping at Dolly's window," "My name it is Jack Hall," "I am a bold Shoemaker, from Belfast Town I came," and other productions of the mendicant muse. The copies of pictures and casts were commonly sold for three half-crowns each; the original sketches—some of them a little free in posture, and not over-delicately handled—were framed and disposed of for any sum from two to five guineas, according to the cleverness of the piece, or the generosity of the purchaser. Though far inferior to the productions of his manhood, they were much admired; engravers found it profitable to copy them, and before he was sixteen years old, his name had flown far and wide.

But long before he was sixteen he had begun to form those unfortunate habits by which the story of his life is to be darkened. From ten years of age he appears to have led the life of a prisoner and a slave under the roof of his father, hearing in this seclusion the merry din of the schoolboys in the street, without hope of partaking in their sports. By-and-by he managed to obtain an hour's relaxation at the twilight, and then associated with such idle and profligate boys as chance threw in his way, and learned from them a love of coarse enjoyment, and the knowledge that it could not well be obtained without

money. Oppression keeps the school of Cunning: young Morland resolved not only to share in the profits of his own talents, but also to snatch an hour or so of amusement, without consulting his father. When he made three drawings for his father, he made one secretly for himself, and giving a signal from his window, lowered it by a string to two or three knowing boys, who found a purchaser at a reduced price, and spent the money with the young artist. A common taproom was an indifferent school of manners, whatever it might be for painting, and there this gifted lad was now often to be found late in the evening, carousing with hostlers and potboys, handing round the quart pot, and singing his song or cracking his joke.[1]

His father, having found out the contrivance by which he raised money for this kind of revelry, adopted, in his own imagination, a wiser course. He resolved to make his studies as pleasant to him as he could; and as George was daily increasing in fame and his works in price, this could be done without any loss. He indulged his son, now some sixteen years old, with wine, pampered his appetite with richer food, and moreover allowed him a little pocket-money to spend among his companions, and purchase acquaintance with what the vulgar call life. He dressed him, too, in a style of ultra-dandyism, and exhibited him at his easel to his customers, attired in a green coat with very long skirts, and immense yellow buttons, buckskin breeches, and top boots with spurs. He permitted him, too, to sing wild songs, swear grossly, and talk about anything he liked with such freedom as makes anxious parents tremble.[2] With all these indulgences the

[1] Messrs. Redgrave say that Morland "learnt to paint by copying the works of the Dutch and Flemish schools." It was probably these copies that he sold, and they being mostly of tavern subjects may have created the impression that even at this age he was acquainted with the "common taproom's indifferent school of manners;" but this was scarcely likely while under his father's strict supervision. His early subjects, at all events, were not painted from nature, but from Dutch originals.—Ed.

[2] These foolish stories give a very unfair view of the elder Morland, who, from all other accounts, was a man of considerable talent and high principle, and was not at all likely to have brought up his son in the way

boy was not happy; he aspired but the more eagerly after full liberty and the unrestrained enjoyment of the profits of his pencil.

During this feverish period he was introduced to Reynolds, obtained permission to copy some of his works, and began to be very generally noticed as an artist of no common promise. His father was his constant companion when he went out a-copying; more, it is said, though it can scarcely be believed, with the intention of seizing upon his productions, than with the desire of preserving him from loose associates or the charms of the taproom. He went to copy the painting of Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy in the gallery of Mr. Angerstein, and the proprietor, a man of taste, and a lover of art, desired to view the work in its progress. The elder Morland declared that his son George had refused to begin his copy till it was promised that no one should overlook him, and that

here described. Allan Cunningham himself, indeed, in his MSS. notes, admits that he has misrepresented him. "James Ward," he says, "called and told me I had made a mistake in my life of Morland by saying that he, James Ward, was married to Morland's sister, whereas it was his brother, the mezzotint engraver, who was many years his elder. I had also wrongly represented Morland's father. He was a good man, and nothing of a libertine." Henry Morland was over fifty when his eldest son George was born, and appears to have experienced some vicissitude of fortune, though never actually to have fallen into "indigence." Collins speaks of him as "a man much respected by all who knew him for his liberality and gentlemanly address." His mistake seems to have lain in bringing up his son George somewhat too strictly. He never allowed him to attend the art schools for fear of the contaminating influence of other students, but, apprenticing him to himself, he tried his best to train him in the paths of industry and virtue, while at the same time he gave him a thoroughly sound artistic education. We know how all this care was rewarded. George probably owed much in his art to the early systematic teaching of his father, who, perceiving his quick powers of observation and fertile invention, insisted on correctness in copying and steady application to the drudgery of painting; but the boy's joyous artistic nature, not unnaturally perhaps, rebelled against the strict discipline in which he was held, and when he became free the reaction and the temptation proved too much for him.

Such, it may be imagined, without giving too much credit to the stories told of father and son, was the real history of their relation to each other, and not one of avarice on the one side and cunning on the other, as some writers have represented it.—ED.

he should act in the house as he thought proper. This coarse arrogance was submitted to—young Morland refused all invitations to mix with the family of Angerstein—he descended to the servants' hall—emptied his flagon—cracked his wild jest, and was exceedingly happy.

How he escaped from the thraldom of his father has been related by Hassell and by Smith, and as they contradict each other, I shall rehearse both accounts. The former, who knew Morland well, says, that "he was determined to make his escape from the rigid confinement which paternal authority had imposed upon him; and, wild as a young quadruped that had broke loose from his den, at length, though late, effectually accomplished his purpose." "Young George was of so unsettled a disposition," says Smith, "that his father, being fully aware of his extraordinary talents, was determined to force him to get his own living, and gave him a guinea, with something like the following observation: 'I am *determined* to encourage your idleness no longer; there—take that guinea, and apply to your art and support yourself.' This Morland told me, and added, that from that moment he commenced and continued wholly on his own account." It would appear by Smith's relation, that our youth, instead of supporting his father, had all along been depending on his help; this, however, contradicts not only Hassell, but Fuseli also, who, in his edition of Pilkington's Dictionary, accuses the elder Morland of avariciously pocketing the whole profits of his son's productions.

In the seventeenth year of his age he left his father's house, with his easel, his palette, his pencils—and dressed in his favourite green coat and top boots. "He was in the very extreme of foppish puppyism," says Hassell, "his head, when ornamented according to his own taste, resembled a snowball, after the model of Tippy Bob, of dramatic memory, to which was attached a short thick tail, not unlike a painter's brush." Thus accomplished and accoutred, with little money in his pocket, and a large conceit of himself, he made an excursion to Margate, with the twofold purpose of enjoying *life* and painting portraits. His skill of hand was great—his facility, it is said, won-

drous; while his oddity of dress, his extreme youth, and the story of his early studies, attracted curiosity and attention—and sitters came—the wealthy and the beautiful. But the painter loved low company—all that was polished or genteel was the object of his implacable dislike. He had not patience to finish any portrait that he commenced, nor the prudence to conceal his scorn of his betters. The man who could leave wealthy sitters to join in the amusement of a pig, an ass, or a smock race, was not likely to have such patrons long; and Morland returned to London with a dozen of unfinished portraits, on which he had received little or no money.

A well-known nobleman had heard of Morland's talents, and now commissioned him to paint a few pictures, for which he provided the subjects. This is a sort of drudgery which genius, if it consults its dignity, will seldom submit to; but when the subjects are "not particularly distinguished for their purity"—these are the words of Hassell—the commissions ought to be rejected with indignant loathing. To those commissions the biographer now cited hesitates not to impute that "particular distaste which he ever after evinced for the society of virtuous women;" and discovers in them "a reason why so striking a resemblance to the frail sisterhood is found in the female subjects which occur in some of his productions." Let his lordship answer for real and not imaginary sins. Morland had moved too long in gross company to leave the honour of polluting his mind to any one of the peerage. He had become ere this the boon-companion of hostlers, pot-boys, horse-jockeys, money lenders, pawnbrokers, punks, and pugilists. With these comrades he roamed the streets and made excursions by land and water; the ribald jest, the practical joke, and scenes coarse and sensual, formed long ere now the staple of his life.

Amidst all this wildness and dissipation, his name was still rising. He valued his pencil as the means of acquiring not distinction, but the gold wherewith to charm away creditors and liquidate tavern bills. The pictures which he dashed off according to the craving of the hour, are numerous and excellent. They are all fac-similes of low

nature—graphic copies of common life—their truth is their beauty, and if they have anything poetical about them, it lies in the singular ease and ruminating repose which is the reigning character of many. Pigs and asses were his chief favourites; and if he had stolen them, or dealt in them, as one of his rustic admirers declared, he could not have painted them better. The sheep on the hill, the cattle in the shade, and the peasant superintending the economy of the barn-yard, the piggery, or the cow-house, shared also largely in his regard. He was likewise skilful in landscape—not in that combination of what is lovely or grand, over which a poetical mind sheds a splendour that anticipates paradise; but in close, dogged fidelity, which claims the merit of looking like some known spot where pigs prowl, cattle graze, or asses browse. At this period he lodged in a neat house at Kensal Green, on the road to Harrow, and was frequently in the company of Ward, the painter, whose example of moral steadiness was exhibited to him in vain.

While he resided at Kensal Green, he fell in love with Miss Ward—a young lady of beauty and modesty—and soon afterwards married her;[1] she was the sister of his friend the painter; and to make the family union stronger, Ward sued for the hand of Maria Morland, and in about a month after his sister's marriage obtained it. In the joy of this double union, the brother artists took joint possession of a good house in High Street, Marylebone. Morland suspended for a time his habit of insobriety, discarded the social comrades of his laxer hours, and imagined himself reformed. But discord broke out between the sisters concerning the proper division of rule and authority in the house; and Morland, whose partner's claim perhaps was the weaker, took refuge in lodgings in Great Portland Street.[2] His passion for late hours and low com-

[1] They were married in July, 1786. His friend Ward was not the painter James Ward, as before stated, but his elder brother William, a mezzotint engraver of some reputation. It was William also who married Maria Morland, a lady who inherited the family talent, though she gave up painting after her marriage.—Ed.

[2] This joint establishment only lasted three months, but its salutary in-

pany, restrained through courtship and the honeymoon, now broke out with the violence of a stream which had been dammed in rather than dried up. It was in vain that his wife entreated and remonstrated—his old propensities prevailed; and the post-boy, the pawnbroker, and the pugilist were summoned again to his side, no more to be separated.

Before the rupture of this brotherhood, Ward made some engravings from the pictures of Morland, which obtained the notice of Raphael Smith, an engraver of talent and enterprise, who knew the town, and felt the value, and foresaw the popularity of those productions. Under his directions Morland painted many pictures from familiar scenes of life; Smith engraved them with considerable skill, the prints had a sale rapid beyond example, and nothing stood between the painter and fortune but his own indiscretion. "Those works," says Hassell, "showed that he had a wonderful facility in seizing those propitious coincidences—those light, ornamental, and minute proprieties and graces which contribute such an ample store to the genuine stock of original composition of consummate art. The harmonious combination of his backgrounds, his drapery, ever natural and decorous, without confusion and perplexity; his children, also, his sheep, his horses, his pigs, and all the appendages of the rural landscape, including every other department of picturesque scenery, are still classed among the finest of modern productions, are still objects of imitation to young students, and are still considered and exhibited by the best judges and patrons of the fine arts as most remarkably neat, correct, and elegant views of nature."

In those days, before folly had entirely fixed him for her own, Morland loved to visit the Isle of Wight, and some

fluence is shown by the fact that during this time Morland painted his series of six pictures called "Letitia, or Seduction," a story with a moral, told somewhat in the manner of Hogarth, which became popular by means of engraving. About the same time also he painted two small pairs of pictures called "The Idle and Industrious Mechanic," and "The Idle Laundress and Industrious Cottager," likewise "The Fruits of Early Industry and Economy"—a subject which his own experience must have well qualified him to represent.—Ed.

of his best pictures are copied from scenes upon the coast. A rocky shore—an agitated surf—fishermen repairing their nets and careening their boats, or disposing of their fish, generally formed part of his pictures. He was ever ready, too, to join them in their labour, and more so in the mirth and carousal which followed. A friend once found him at Freshwater-gate, in a low public-house called The Cabin. Sailors, rustics, and fishermen, were seated round him in a kind of ring, the rooftree rung with laughter and song; and Morland, with manifest reluctance, left their company for the conversation of his friend. "George," said his monitor, "you must have reasons for keeping such company." "Reasons, and good ones," said the artist, laughing; "see—where could I find such a picture of life as that, unless among the originals of The Cabin?" He held up his sketch-book and showed a correct delineation of the very scene in which he had so lately been the presiding spirit. One of his best pictures contains this facsimile of the taproom, with its guests and furniture.

The early management of his father had made the whole swarm of picture-dealers, cleaners, and copiers acquainted with Morland's value, and, what was far more unfortunate, had let them into the secret of his personal tastes. They knew his love of low company, his delight in the bottle, and his desire to enjoy the passing moment, whatever expense it might incur; and some of them were ever at his elbow to lay down the gold for present pleasures, upon the understanding that the pencil should clear off the debt. His absurd aversion to decent company naturally aided the views of those sordid miscreants; they applauded his vulgar prejudice as true independence, and pushed about the jest, apparently at the expense of "the fine people," but really and truly at the cost of the unhappy Morland, who sat in ideal sole monarch of the realm of free and unshackled art. These wretches affected a vice to which they were strangers; they put on the aspect of prodigality, and with the determination in their hearts of exacting a bitter percentage for this condescension, accompanied him on his country excursions, made up his drinking parties, and attended at his painting-room with a purse in one hand and

a bottle in the other. "It frequently happened," observes one of his biographers, "when a picture had been bespoke by one of his friends, who advanced some of the money to induce him to work, if the purchaser did not stand by to see it finished and carry it away with him, some other person, who was lurking within sight for that purpose, and knew the state of Morland's pocket, by the temptation of a few guineas laid upon the table, carried off the picture. Thus all were served in their turn; and though each exulted in the success of the trick when he was so lucky as to get a picture in this easy way, they all joined in exclaiming against Morland's want of honesty in not keeping his promises to them."

Those honest sufferers were not without their remedy. The picture which they purchased for five guineas sold readily for twenty; one guinea's worth of liquor was often repaid by a sketch which brought ten; and if that was insufficient, they employed some dexterous and unprincipled limner to make fac-similes of the most popular of Morland's works, which they found people rich enough and ignorant enough to buy as originals. "I once saw," says Hassell, "twelve copies from a small picture of Morland's at one time in a dealer's shop, with the original in the centre; the proprietor of which, with great gravity and unblushing assurance, inquired if I could distinguish the difference."[1] With reptiles such as these, genius ought

[1] "We have from good authority," writes Redgrave, "a fact which closely relates to the great number of works attributed to Morland. He was for some years (commencing about 1794) under articles to Mr. B——, a picture dealer, who employed him in painting original pictures at his own house; his daily service commencing early and concluding at dinner time, probably twelve o'clock. Immediately Morland had left, expert copyists were employed in making accurate and elaborate repetitions of his day's work, which were carefully *concealed*. Returning to his own work on the following morning, any changes which, upon reconsideration, Morland might think well to make in his picture, were in the afternoon transferred to each copy in progress under the hands of his treacherous copyists. Thus, at least four or five pictures were carried on *together* to completion, the painter never suspecting the trick that was played; each of these counterfeits bearing those marks of changes in design and alterations of effect that would seem to give proof of its genuineness.—Ed.

never to come into communion; it must be confessed, however, that Morland was not incommoded in his intercourse with them by any over-righteous notions as to money matters. In the course of the years 1790, 1791, and 1792, when his cleverest pictures were painted, the admiring dealers swarmed round him with offers of pecuniary assistance to any amount.[1] George put his hands into their pockets without the least ceremony. He was a joyful borrower, and took whatever was offered without scruple or hesitation. He made no nice distinctions; for he accepted from all, and he held out to all the pleasing prospect of sevenfold remuneration from the pencil.

The evil consequences of all this required no prophetic spirit to foretell. It was in vain that his wife, a woman of sense and beauty, endeavoured to reclaim him; equally

[1] It was in 1791 that he painted and exhibited at the Royal Academy the masterly picture of the "Inside of a Stable," which has been added this year (1877) to the national collection, by the gift of Mr. Thomas Birch Wolfe. This is considered by many critics to be his masterwork, and indeed it is a marvel of accurate delineation and careful study, differing greatly in this from some of the hasty sketchy productions that pass with his name. The scene inside the stable, which is said to represent that of the White Lion at Paddington, is rendered with effects of light and shade, such as the great Dutch masters delighted in. The whole picture indeed has a savour of Dutch art, though Morland's individuality is thoroughly apparent in it. Few even of the Dutch animal painters could have painted the coat of the pony which is being led by a boy into the stable with a more complete understanding of its nature and complex colour. Morland, before this picture was presented, had been unrepresented in the national collection, but his paintings are constantly to be met with in private collections in this country. The prints also, which Raphael Smith and his brother-in-law, William Ward, executed from his works, are not difficult to obtain, though after a long period of neglect they are now again being sought after by connoisseurs. His work was peculiarly adapted for the mode of mezzotint engraving then in vogue, his broad effects and dashing style coming out with great effect in these reproductions. Mr. Wedmore traces in his art, particularly in its later expression, the influence of Gainsborough, and it may well be as he says, that it was "Gainsborough who opened Morland's eyes to the treasure of subject that was in country life;" but Morland never idealized like Gainsborough, who gave a poetic grace even to the most common country scene. With Morland, as with the Dutch masters, it is the actual not the idyllic view of peasant life that is represented, and such charm as his works possess lies for the most part in this entire fidelity to nature.—ED.

vain was the interposition of his friends; who were only laughed at when they assured him that a life of unmeasured conviviality, and habits of incalculable profusion, must injure his skill of hand and his capacity of intellect, and immure him, sooner or later, in a prison. His fine constitution triumphed for a time over the ordinary results of debauchery, and his knowledge of the town and active adroitness in avoiding tipstaffs, kept him long from acquaintance with the gaol. It is probable, indeed, that those to whom he was indebted were more willing to alarm him, than actually take his liberty from him; they knew that confinement could not hasten the payment—that the estate out of which their money was to come was of the mind; and, what was equally serious, it could be turned over to a new swarm of dealers in pictures, who would inherit all their profits.

Having received an invitation from Claude Lorraine Smith, a gentleman of Leicestershire, he suddenly vanished from the constant watchfulness of these creditors, carrying with him a trusty friend and five-bottle debauchee, whose neglect of the toilet had obtained him the name of Dirty Brookes. His entertainer, an artist himself and an encourager of art, was also wealthy and hospitable, and Morland was received with great kindness; even Dirty Brookes was an object of attention and solicitude. It is true that the artist, in the midst of Mr. Smith's company, was sometimes heard to sigh for the rougher freedom of the ale-house, and lamented to his bosom friend that so much good wine should be drunk without loud mirth and merry song, and in accordance with an etiquette distressing to the convivial notions of hostlers and pugilists. He found some consolation, perhaps, in accompanying Mr. Smith to the fox-chase, or at least in the conviviality which at evening rewarded the devotees of that rough pastime; and it is reported that both he and Dirty Brookes regained the reputation which they lost by day in the chase, through their prowess over the bottle by night. He found time, however, to make some sketches of Leicestershire scenery, which he afterwards wrought into pictures.

His sudden disappearance from London excited general alarm in the whole righteous race of picture-dealers; no one knew what had become of him, and a waggish companion insinuated that he was gone to France. Some of those men had advanced money on bespoke pictures; others had paid money upon works begun, and the interest of the whole was concerned—it would be only misleading the reader to say that Morland felt at all anxious respecting them. To him the completion of such commissions was a matter of total indifference; he knew that these patrons had doomed him to constant slavery, that they merely looked upon him as an engine which augmented their incomes, and of which they had only to keep the wheels oiled. When he reappeared, the gloom passed from their looks, and they hastened to share in the spoils arising from his paintings of the scenery of Leicestershire.

Yet wild and imprudent as he was, and sunk in almost constant debauchery, his skill seemed only to augment, and his rapidity of execution to increase. Indolence cannot be ranked among his sins. Pleasure he found could not be purchased without money; his companions were not the followers of an empty purse, and even Dirty Brookes himself, who fell a sacrifice in sharing Morland's excesses, was more moderate in his mirth when he was in danger of settling the reckoning from his own pocket. To get money it was necessary to work; and certainly during his brief career he wrought diligently. Four thousand pictures, and most of them of great merit, which he left to continue his name, tell us that, with the sharp sword of necessity at his back, he laboured as diligently and successfully as if he had lived in wealth and in honour.[1]

[1] Many of these were doubtless produced in the manner before stated, but still the rapidity with which Morland painted is something surprising. His biographer, Dawe, relates, that during the last eight years of his life, Morland painted for his brother, the picture-dealer, alone, as many as 490 works, and that he probably painted at least 300 more for other people, besides making hundreds of drawings during the same period. —Ed.

During this period Morland lived at Paddington, where he was visited by the popular pugilists of the day, by the most eminent horse-dealers, and by his never-failing companions the picture-merchants. He was a lover of guinea-pigs, dogs, rabbits, and squirrels; he extended his affection also to asses. At one time he was the owner of eight saddle horses, which were kept at the White Lion; and, that the place might be worthy of an artist's stud, he painted the sign where they stood at livery with his own hand. He wished to be thought a consummate judge of horseflesh and a dealer in the article. But he was taught that his wisdom did not lie in that way by two or three sagacious horse-jockeys, and began to find that all the cunning of the island was not monopolized by the picture-dealers. For indifferent horses he paid with excellent pictures; or, what was worse, with bills which he was not always, if ever, prepared to take up; and when due, purchased an extension of the time by the first picture he had ready. His wine-merchant, too, was in the discounting line, and obtained sometimes a picture worth fifty pounds for similar accommodation. "He heaped folly upon folly," says Hassell, "with such dire rapidity, that a fortune of ten thousand pounds per annum would have proved insufficient for the support of his waste and prodigality."

He was as vain as he was prodigal—was anxious for the smiles of the meanest of mankind; and as for flattery, any one might lay it on with a trowel. At the grossness of his humour all the hostlers laughed, and he that laughed loudest was generally rewarded with a half-crown or a pair of buckskin breeches little the worse for wear. His acquaintances on the north road were numerous; he knew the driver of every coach, and the pedigree of the horses, and taking his stand at Bob Bellamy's inn at Highgate, would halloo to the gentlemen of the whip as they made their appearance, and treat them to gin and brandy. "Frequently," says one of his biographers, "he would parade, with a pipe in his mouth, before the door of the house, and hail the carriages as they passed in succession before him; and, from being so well known,

was generally greeted in return by a familiar salute from the postilion. The consequence he attached to this species of homage was almost beyond belief."

He once (we are told) received an invitation to Barnet, and was hastening thither with Hassell and another friend, when he was stopt at Whetstone turnpike by a lumber or jockey cart, driven by two persons, one of them a chimney-sweep, who were disputing with the toll-gatherer. Morland endeavoured to pass, when one of the wayfarers cried, "What! Mr. Morland, won't you speak to a body!" The artist endeavoured to elude further greeting, but this was not to be; the other bawled out so lustily that Morland was obliged to recognize at last his companion and crony, Hooper, a tinman and pugilist. After a hearty shake of the hand, the boxer turned to his neighbour the chimney-sweep, and said, "Why, Dick, don't you know this here gentleman? 'tis my friend, Mr. Morland." The sooty charioteer, smiling a recognition, forced his unwelcome hand upon his brother of the brush; they then both whipt their horses and departed. This rencontre mortified Morland very sensibly; he declared that he knew nothing of the chimney-sweep, and that he was forced upon him by the impertinence of Hooper: but the artist's habits made the story be generally believed, and "Sweeps, your honour," was a joke which he was often obliged to hear.

Raphael Smith, the engraver, had employed Morland for years on works *from* which he engraved, and *by* which he won large sums of money.[1] He called one day with Bannister the comedian to look at a picture which was upon the easel. Smith was satisfied with the artist's progress, and said, "I shall now proceed on my morning ride." "Stay a moment," said Morland, laying down his brush, "and I will go with you." "Morland," answered

[1] The large demand there was for these prints, shows how well Morland's subjects pleased the popular taste. Five hundred sets of his "Dancing Dogs" and "Selling Guinea Pigs" were sold in a few weeks; and Redgrave states, that when his four plates of "The Deserter" were published, a single dealer immediately gave an order for nine dozen sets.—ED.

the other, in an emphatic tone, which could not be mistaken, "I have an appointment with a *gentleman*, who is waiting for me." Such a sarcasm might have cured any man who was not incurable; it made but a momentary impression upon the mind of our painter, who cursed the engraver, and returned to his palette.

His love of horses, once great, gradually subsided; he at length studiously refused any intercourse with the worthy fraternity of horse-dealers, not because he felt that they cheated him as often as he risked making a bargain, but because he had found another method of disposing of his pictures. He now retired to some secluded place, set up his easel, dashed off a few paintings, and entrusted them to the care and the conscience of a bosom crony, whose name is not mentioned, and whose business it was to dispose of them in the most profitable market. The claim which this associate had upon his confidence was confirmed by many a deep and prolonged carousal, nor is there reason to believe that the man failed to do his best—he returned with the money—it was instantly melted into gin and brandy.

All his early pride of dress gradually vanished; his clothes were now mean, his looks squalid, and when he ventured into the streets of London, he was so haunted by creditors, real or imaginary, that he skulked rather than walked, and kept a look-out on suspicious alleys and corners of evil reputation. If he saw any one looking anxiously at him, which many must have done out of compassion for the wreck which folly had wrought with genius, he instantly imagined him a creditor, and fled like quicksilver, for he was in debt to so many that he dreaded duns in every street. Harassed by incessant apprehensions of arrest, he shifted from place to place, and before the close of his career was acquainted with every spot of secresy or refuge within the four counties which surrounded the metropolis. One day, wearied with perpetual changing of abode, he took his crony with him to make a regular inspection of the King's Bench Prison. They were conducted over that strange scene, which then remained exactly as it is described by Smollett, and departed with a lively conviction that such quarters as Hatchway and Tom Pipes

coveted so early would be worse than any our painter had yet experienced. The squalors of the *Bare*, however, left no impression strong enough to alter his conduct.

On one occasion he hid himself in Hackney; where his anxious looks and secluded manner of life induced some of his charitable neighbours to believe him a maker of forged notes. The Directors of the Bank despatched two of their most dexterous emissaries to inquire, reconnoitre, search, and seize. These men arrived, and began to draw lines of circumvallation round the painter's retreat; he was not, however, to be surprised—mistaking those agents of evil mien for bailiffs, he escaped from behind as they approached in front—fled into Hoxton, and never halted till he had hid himself in London. Nothing was found to justify suspicion, and when Mrs. Morland, who was his companion in this retreat, told them who her husband was, and showed them some unfinished pictures, they made such a report at the Bank, that the Directors presented him with a couple of Bank notes of £20 each, by way of compensation for the alarm they had given him.

The sad estate into which he had fallen, made any story of his distress be believed, and before his death, as well as after, "anecdotes of Morland the painter" were regularly manufactured for newspapers and magazines. "He was found"—I copy these words from Fuseli's edition of Pilkington—"He was found at another time in a lodging in Somers Town, in the following most extraordinary circumstances:—his infant child, that had been dead nearly three weeks, lay in its coffin; in one corner of the room an ass and foal stood munching barley straw out of the cradle—a sow and pigs were solacing themselves in the recess of an old cupboard, and himself whistling over a beautiful picture that he was finishing at his easel, with a bottle of gin hung upon one side, and a live mouse sitting for its portrait on the other." I must, however, abate the pathetic of this scene. Morland lived and died childless; consequently the infant dead in the coffin, and the ass and the foal eating hay out of the cradle must be dismissed from the group.

It may be safer to select a few anecdotes from Hassell,

his intimate friend. This person's first introduction to Morland was in character. "As I was walking (he says) towards Paddington on a summer morning, to inquire about the health of a relation, I saw a man posting on before me, with a sucking-pig, which he carried in his arms like a child. The piteous squeaks of the little animal, and the singular mode of conveyance, drew spectators to door and window; the person, however, who carried it, minded no one, but to every dog that barked—and there were not a few—he set down the pig, pitted him against the dog, and then followed the chase which was sure to ensue. In this manner he went through several streets in Mary-le-bone, and at last stopping at the door of one of my friends, was instantly admitted. I also knocked and entered, but my surprise was great on finding this original sitting with the pig still under his arm, and still greater when I was introduced to Morland the painter."

A mutual friend, at whose house Morland resided when in the Isle of Wight, having set out for London, left an order with an acquaintance in Cowes to give the painter his own price for whatever works he might please to send. The pictures were accompanied by a regular solicitation for cash in proportion, or according to the nature of the subject. At length a small but very highly-finished drawing arrived, and as the sum demanded seemed out of all proportion with the size of the drawing, the conscientious agent transmitted the piece to London, and stated the price. The answer by post was, "Pay what is asked, and get as many others as you can at the same price." There is not one sketch in the collection thus made but what would now produce thrice its original cost.

One evening Hassell and some friends were returning to town from Hampstead, when Morland accosted them in the character of a mounted patrole, wearing the parish great-coat, girded with a broad black belt, and a pair of pistols depending. He hailed them with "horse patrole!" in his natural voice; they recognized him and laughed heartily, upon which he entreated them to stop at the Mother Red Cap, a well-known public-house, till he joined them. He soon made his appearance in his proper dress, and gave

way to mirth and good-fellowship. On another occasion he paid a *parishioner*, who was drawn for constable, to be permitted to serve in his place; he billeted soldiers during the day, and presided in the constable's chair at night. At another time, having promised to paint a picture for M. de Colonne, he seemed unwilling to begin, but was stimulated by the following stratagem. Opposite to his house in Paddington was the White Lion; Hassell directed two of his friends to breakfast there, and instructed them to look anxiously towards the artist's windows, and occasionally walk up and down before the house. He then waited on Morland, who only brandished his brush at the canvas and refused to work. After waiting some time, Hassell went to the window and affected surprise at seeing two strangers gazing at the artist's house. Morland looked at them earnestly, declared they were bailiffs, who certainly wanted him—and ordered the door to be bolted. Hassell having secured him at home, showed him the money for his work, and so dealt with him that the picture was completed, a landscape and six figures, one of his best productions, in six hours. He then paid him and relieved his apprehensions respecting the imaginary bailiffs —Morland laughed heartily. He considered it as a kind of pleasant interruption to the monotony of painting and drinking, that he was apprehended as a spy at Yarmouth, and subjected to a sharp examination. The drawings which he had made on the shores of the Isle of Wight were considered as confirmation of his guilt; he was honoured, therefore, with an escort of soldiers and constables to Newport, and there confronted by a bench of justices. At his explanation they shook their heads, laid a strict injunction upon him to paint and draw no more in that neighbourhood, and dismissed him. On another occasion, he was on his way from Deal, and Williams, the engraver, was his companion. The extravagance of the preceding evening had fairly emptied their pockets; weary, hungry, and thirsty, they arrived at a small ale-house by the wayside; they hesitated to enter. Morland wistfully reconnoitred the house, and at length accosted the landlord— "Upon my life I scarcely knew it: is this the Black Bull?"

"To be sure it is, master," said the landlord, "there's the sign." "Ay! the board is there, I grant," replied our wayfarer, "but the Black Bull is vanished and gone. I will paint you a capital new one for a crown." The landlord consented, and placed a dinner and drink before this restorer of signs, to which the travellers did immediate justice. "Now, landlord," said Morland, "take your horse and ride into Canterbury—it is but a little way—and buy me proper paint and a good brush." He went on his errand with a grudge, and returned with the speed of thought, for fear that his guests should depart in his absence. By the time that Morland had painted the Black Bull, the reckoning had risen to ten shillings, and the landlord reluctantly allowed them to go on their way; but not, it is said, without exacting a promise that the remainder of the money should be paid with the first opportunity. The painter, on his arrival in town, related this adventure in the Hole-in-the-Wall, Fleet Street. A person who overheard him, mounted his horse, rode into Kent, and succeeded in purchasing the Black Bull from this Kentish Boniface for ten guineas.

A bailiff, more subtle than his brethren, succeeded in arresting Morland. Fallen as he was, and discovered by the officer wallowing in a sty of filth and debauchery, his talents still found him friends, by whose recommendation and influence he obtained the Rules of the Bench. "This ill-fated artist," says Hassell, "seemed to have possessed two minds—one, the animated soul of genius, by which he rose in his profession—and the other, that debased grovelling propensity, which condemned him to the very abyss of dissipation." In his new abode of misery—among the wreck of proud fortunes and high hopes—in the company of some whom prodigality had utterly ruined, and of others who had only retired hither that they might live in affluence in spite of their just creditors—Morland was found by Hassell; he was not only content, but, like Tam o' Shanter in his glory, conceived himself victorious over all the ills of life. Even here he could jest and revel, indulge the wildest whims, and luxuriate in oddities and caprices.

Even amidst misery and recklessness like this, the spirit of industry did not forsake him, nor did his taste or his skill descend with his fortunes. One day's work would have purchased him a week's sustenance; yet he laboured every day, and as skilfully and beautifully as ever. His favourite companion in his retreat was a waterman whom, by way of distinction, Morland called "My Dicky," and Dicky was now the established vendor of his pictures. If chance detained the purchaser of a bespoke painting beyond the time he promised to send for it, "My Dicky" was instantly despatched with it to the pawnbroker's. Dicky once carried a picture wet from the easel, with a request for the advance of three guineas upon it. The pawnbroker paid the money; but in carrying it into the room his foot slipped, and the head and foreparts of a hog were obliterated. The money-changer returned the picture with a polite note, requesting the artist to restore the damaged part. "My Dicky!" exclaimed Morland, "an that's a good one! but never mind!" He reproduced the hog in a few minutes, and said, "There! go back and tell the pawnbroker to advance me five guineas more upon it; and if he won't, say I shall proceed against him; the price of the picture is thirty guineas." The demand was complied with.

For Spencer of Bow Street he painted several pictures; one of the best was a straw-yard; it had evidently cost him some pains, and he was no lover of minute work. He had introduced accordingly a raven seated on a straw-rack, and written on the rail under its feet, "No more straw-yards for me, G. Morland." The multitude of his orders induced him to neglect the finishing of many of his pictures, and the purchasers, glad to get them as they were, employed some second-rate hand to glaze up the foreground; "but this," observes Hassell, "was confined to picture dealers, whose skill lay in supplying half-worn landscapes with new skies, and in cracking and varnishing new historical pictures to produce the appearance of antiquity." His common price, when in confinement, was "four guineas per day with his drink;" and his employer sat down beside him telling pleasant stories and pouring

out liquor till the time expired. It often required some skill to obtain a good day's work, for the glass was apt to be in his fingers in the morning before the pencil, and he continued to handle both alternately till he had painted as much as he pleased, or till the liquor got the better, when he claimed his wages, and business closed for the day.

He had no wish, however, to be distinguished as a resident in the realm of durance: taking advantage of the liberty of a day-rule in term time, he borrowed a horse—rode from house to house among his friends in the country round London—contradicted boldly the story of his imprisonment—returned to town at the spur, and exhibited himself at every low pot-house on his way to the Rules. His vanity soared not beyond the present moment; to make a good passing impression was his chief aim; and while his money lasted, he was sure of success among those whose applause he valued. Though well-descended, he regarded that matter little, and would rather have had the laugh of a pot-house on his side than all the emblazonments of heraldry. In his earlier and better days, a solicitor informed him that he was heir to a baronet's title, and advised him to assert his claim. I know not whether there was any real foundation for this lawyer's story. "Sir George Morland!" however, said the painter, "It sounds well, but it won't do. Plain George Morland will always sell my pictures, and there is more honour in being a fine painter than in being a fine gentleman."

When the Insolvent Debtors' Act at length restored him to liberty, he was almost past the power of enjoying it. His constitution was ruined, and his personal character was sunk into general contempt. No one would associate with him but the meanest of mankind, nor did he wish this otherwise.[1] In his thirty-ninth year, the palsy struck him. He recovered partially, but would often fall

[1] He lived at this time in a house at Lambeth, which was the constant resort of his prison associates. He was sometimes intoxicated for days together, and would generally pass the night in a drunken state on the floor.—Ed.

back senseless in his painting chair, and sometimes sink into sleep with his palette and brush in his hand. His left hand was so much affected, that he could no longer hold the implements of his profession. He was not, however, dismayed; he made drawings in pencil and in chalk, tinted them lightly, still enriched the country with works at once bold, original, and striking, and seemed to set want and disease at defiance. But the swiftest runner is soonest at the end of his journey. Morland was carried for debt to a spunging-house in Air Street, and to strengthen his courage on the loss of his liberty, swallowed an unusual quantity of spirits, which, instead of stupefaction, produced fever. Atwell, the keeper of the house, became alarmed, and applied to his friends for assistance: their sympathy, if exerted—of which there is no proof—came too late; the powers of life were exhausted, and he died, after a brief illness, in utter wretchedness and penury, in the fortieth year of his age. His wife, from whom he had been separated for some time, in consequence of family feuds, survived him only a few days.[1]

Morland had a look at once sagacious and sensual, and the same friends who compared his forehead to that of Napoleon, represent him as vain and irritable, fretful and vindictive. His character as a man was essentially vulgar, and he seemed insensible to shame. He loved all kinds of company save that of gentlemen; it gave him pain to imitate the courtesies and decencies of life, and he disliked accordingly all those whose habits required their obser-

[1] He died, not in Air Street, but in Eyre Street, Coldbath Fields, on the 29th of October, 1804, in his forty-first year. His poor wife, who appears to have truly loved him in spite of all his faults, was so overcome at hearing the news that she fell into convulsive fits which ended four days after in her death, and thus united at last, they were buried together in a small graveyard belonging to St. James's Chapel, Hampstead Road. William Collins, the artist, speaks of having been at his funeral, and his biographer relates that when the attendants went away Collins put his stick into the wet earth as far as it would go, and then carried it home and varnished it, keeping it ever after as a relic. It is pleasant to think that this poor reprobate, who wrote his own faithful epitaph in the words, "Here lies a drunken dog," had at least one friend and brother artist who cherished his memory otherwise than by retailing and inventing stories respecting his wild career.—Ed.

vance. He married without being in love, and treated his wife with carelessness, because he was incapable of feeling the merits of modesty or domestic worth. He had fits of profuse generosity and capricious affection; but folly and grossness were his familiar companions.

As an artist Morland's claims to regard are high and undisputed. He is original and alone; his style and conceptions are his own; his thoughts are ever at home—are always natural—he extracts pleasing subjects out of the most coarse or trivial scenes, and finds enough to charm the eye in the commonest occurrence. He never paints above the most ordinary capacity, and gives an air of truth and reality to whatever he touches. He has taken a strong and lasting hold of the popular fancy; not by ministering to our vanity, but by telling plain and striking truths. He is the rustic painter for the people; his scenes are familiar to every eye, and his name is on every lip. Painting seemed as natural to him as language is to others, and by it he expressed his sentiments and his feelings and opened his heart to the multitude. His gradual descent in society may be traced in the productions of his pencil: he could only paint well what he saw or remembered; and when he left the wild sea-shore and the green-wood side for the hedge ale-house and the Rules of the Bench, the character of his pictures shifted with the scene. Yet even then his wonderful skill of hand and sense of the picturesque never forsook him. His intimacy with low life only dictated his theme—the coarseness of the man and the folly of his company never touched the execution of his pieces. All is indeed homely—nay, mean—but native taste and elegance redeem every detail. To a full command over every implement of his art, he united a facility of composition and a free readiness of hand perhaps quite unrivalled.

His pictures were mostly produced under the influence of intoxication, and the strong stimulant of immediate payment; they were painted in the terror of want, and in the presence of the sordid purchaser, who risked five guineas in a venture for twenty—yet they want nothing which art can bestow, or the most fastidious eye desire. Such was

the precious coin with which this unfortunate man paid for gin, obtained the company of the scum and feculence of society, and purchased patience from his creditor, or peace from the tipstaff. The annals of genius record not a more deplorable story than Morland's.

EDWARD BIRD.

EDWARD BIRD was born at Wolverhampton, on the 12th day of April, 1772. His father, a clothier by trade,[1] was a man of sense and information, and gave him a fair education. His mother watched over him—for he was a weakly child—with the most anxious solicitude. When very young—the family tradition says three or four years old—he began to sketch. He would stand on a stool, chalk outlines on the furniture, and say, with childish glee, as he eyed his labours, "Well done, little Neddy Bird!" He would be up with the dawn to draw figures upon the walls, which he called French and English soldiers, and was continually in disgrace with the servant maids of his father's house, who had to make use of their mops and scrubbing-brushes after those early risings.

He was privately encouraged in these pursuits by his eldest sister; his first box of colours was purchased with her pocket-money—long hoarded for that purpose: and after he had risen to distinction, "Sarah," he would sometimes say, "I must thank you for my being an artist." Nor were his talents in those childish days unfelt by his father; but remote from collections of paintings, unacquainted with the fame they bring, and their influence with the world, the worthy clothier never thought of his son becoming a painter by profession, and regarded it at best as a pleasing but unprofitable calling. His first attempt worthy of notice dates from his fourteenth year—this was the imaginary interview between the Earl of Leicester and the daughters whom

[1] Wornum, in his catalogue of the National Gallery, states that the father was a journeyman carpenter, and that Bird was born in 1762. Redgrave, however, and other authorities agree with Cunningham.—Ed.

Miss Lee has conferred on Mary Queen of Scots, in her novel of "The Recess." It is now[1] in the house of the artist's widow.

When his father saw that his love of drawing and sketching was incurable, he began to grow anxious to turn it to some account, but could think of nothing better than apprenticing him to a maker of tea-trays—these accordingly it became the boy's business to ornament and embellish. Birmingham then, as now, sent over the world many productions of domestic usefulness, which require not only skill of hand, but good taste and some fancy. On such things Bird first tried his pencil, and was soon distinguished above his fellow workmen for the neatness and beauty of his embellishments. Of this there is strong proof: long after, when his name was in the ranks of acknowledged genius, he was on a tour in France with several companions, and at Boulogne drank tea off a beautiful tray which excited their notice and praise. Bird looked at it and smiled; when they had recommenced their journey, one of his friends said, "I did not think they could have made such trays in France." "It was not made here," said Bird, "it was made in Birmingham, for I painted it." One of the party was with difficulty restrained from turning back and buying it. Works of this nature, however, are, in a great measure, produced by a kind of mechanical process, in which genius claims little share. The daily reproduction of the same shapes and the same ornaments is but a wearisome task. To dedicate the golden hours of his life to gather wealth for the benefit of some manufacturer, was the original curse of Bird's condition, and he no sooner had the sense to perceive this, than he found courage necessary for setting himself free.

When his indentures expired very advantageous offers were made to induce him to continue with the "trade;" but he refused them all, and, probably without any defined plan of conduct for future life, resigned a connection which, with talents infinitely below his, many could have made highly lucrative.

[1] "Now," meaning in Cunningham's time. I can find no further history of this precocious work.—Ed.

Bird had long felt that yearning after distinction which genius ever feels; he had improved his knowledge in the nature and use of colours; his eye was already familiar with the human form, and his mind stored with those images of social humour and fireside affection in which his strength lay. Of nature as he felt it, and of manners and passions, he had produced many sketches with the pencil—some he had tried to make permanent in oil; and his confidence was daily increasing with his skill.

It was to the advantage of his art that he was thus self-instructed, for his genius was not of that powerful and self-relying order which gains much and loses nothing in the lecture-room, and the mechanical workshop attached to academies. The routine of a regular education in art would probably have tamed down the gentle fire with which nature had endowed his bosom to a very insignificant spark.

Though Bird listened to the call of ambition, he was a wise and prudent man, and obeyed it but in part. He relinquished all connection with Birmingham and her tea-boards, and, removing to Bristol, commenced a drawing-school. During the intervals of instruction, he sketched, designed, and painted with all his early ardour, and with success such as follows patient self-discipline. He by-and-by thought so well of his works that he ventured to show some of them to his friends, and amongst others to Mr. Murphy, an artist of taste and feeling, who liked them so much that he advised their being exhibited. To this Bird was averse for some time, but he at last consented to send two to the Bath Exhibition. It was necessary that a price should be named. The painter wrote down ten guineas each; his friend, with a better sense of their merit, wrote down thirty, and they found ready purchasers. This was in 1807, when Bird was in his thirty-fifth year. His sketch-books, says Mr. Murphy, were at that time filled with subjects fit to expand into paintings, and contained scenes of all kinds, serious and comic. They were marked by an original spirit, and showed a natural skill in grouping. The "Interior of a Volunteer's Cottage" was the subject of one of his works, and "Clowns Dancing in an

Ale-house" another. The threats of a French invasion had

"Brought the freeman's arm to aid the freeman's laws,"

and Bird had the bayonet of a volunteer at that time in his hands. He was surrounded by a growing family. Fame and money were both desirable, and they were both obtained. Art cannot be followed without incurring expense; and the very reputation which genius acquires is a tax upon the pocket by bringing friends and strangers. Our painter's heart opened with his fortune: he was never a profuse, but always a very liberal man.

His first successful work, if we measure success by the applause of the world, was called "Good News."[1] Some of his earlier pictures, I have heard good judges say, were of higher merit,—and this is not unlikely; it seldom happens that the first original work which genius produces seizes the attention of mankind: it is considered by many as the lucky hit of an ordinary mind, and passed by till it is recalled to notice by a continuation of works from the same hand. "The Choristers Rehearsing" and "The Will" followed, and received equal praise, and, what was not less fortunate, obtained purchasers of high distinction. His Majesty bought the first, and added judicious commendation to liberal payment; and the other was purchased by the Marquis of Hastings. The Royal Academy soon afterwards conferred honour on themselves by enrolling our self-taught artist among their number.[2]

His next work was his most poetical, and decidedly his best one. This is a representation of the "Field of Chevy

[1] This was exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1809, where it was much praised by the critics. Bird's reputation, indeed, soon rose so high that he was considered at one time a formidable rival to Wilkie. Indeed, either from jealousy at Wilkie's fame, or from sheer want of perception, the Academy for a time bestowed far greater favour on Bird than upon their young associate Wilkie, who was so modest as to his own merits that he quietly resigned his place in popular esteem to the new candidate, though not, according to Haydon, without feelings of deep mortification.—Ed.

[2] He was elected Associate in 1812, and full Academician two years after. Before this he had come to live in London, and had been appointed painter to the Princess Charlotte.—Ed.

Chase" on the day after the battle. It is painted in the mournful spirit with which the glorious old ballad concludes, and cannot well be looked on without tears. These are the words embodied:—

"Of fifteen hundred Englishmen
Went home but fifty-three;
The rest were slaine in Chevy Chase
Under the greenwoode tree.

"Next day did many widows come
Their husbands to bewayle;
They wash'd their wounds in brinish tears,
But all would not prevayle.

"Theyr bodyes bathed in purple blood
They bare with them away;
They kist them dead a thousand times
Ere they were cladd in clay."

Of this heroic ballad, which Sir Philip Sydney said roused him like the sound of a trumpet, and which Ben Jonson affirmed was well worth all his dramas, the people of England are great admirers, and amongst the peasantry of the south it is almost the only one known. When they saw a painting which gave a life-like and touching image of a scene often present to the fancy, they were loud in its praise. Lady Percy is, with perfect propriety, made a visitor of the fatal field; she appears in deep agony beside the body of her lord. The old Minstrel thought proper to slay Percy by the spear of Sir Hugh Montgomery, and we appeal to history in vain against the poet's decision. The gentle Kate of Shakespeare, who said to Hotspur, in his interview with Glendower, "Lie still, thou thief, and hear the Welch lady sing," had that sorrowful duty to perform at the battle of Shrewsbury, stricken many years after Otterbourne. This exquisite piece, which should have been purchased by some wealthy Douglas or Percy, was bought for 300 guineas by the Marquis of Stafford; while Sir Walter Scott acquired the original sketch. The same munificent nobleman purchased Bird's next picture, the "Death of Eli," for 500 guineas; and the British Insti-

tution added their testimony to its merits, by presenting the painter with their premium, amounting to £315.[1]

Concerning the picture of the "Death of Eli," a curious story was circulated. Bristol long endured the reproach of parsimony both in prose and verse. Two English poets have expressed themselves with no measured bitterness of spirit concerning the sordid spirit of its merchants. Thus sings Richard Savage:—

> "Upstarts and mushrooms; proud, relentless hearts;
> Thou blank of sciences! thou dearth of arts!
> Such foes as learning once was doomed to see,
> Huns, Goths, and Vandals, were but types of thee."

And Robert Lovell is equally severe:—

> "No mild urbanity attracts the sight,
> No arts of skill or elegant delight;
> But sordid wealth inspires the general cry,
> And speeds the step and sharps the eager eye;
> Foul as their streets, triumphant Meanness sways,
> And grovelling as their mud-compelling drays;
> Discordant sounds compose the Babel hum,
> 'Tis—how goes sugar? what's the price of rum?
> What ships arrived? and, how are stocks to-day?
> Who's dead? who's broken? and, who's run away?"

If such reproaches were ever due they are so no longer. Bristol has now her literary and scientific institutions, and can point to many individuals of the most refined manners as well as the most generous liberality among her citizens. Touched somewhat, however, with the spirit described in Lovell's verses, three gentlemen of that city subscribed £100 each, and commissioned, as it is called, a picture from the pencil of Bird. He painted the "Death of Eli." The lucky proprietors sold it for 500 guineas; and, inspired with this, perhaps, unexpected profit, clubbed their hundreds again and waited on the painter with a fresh commission. But he had no wish to have his brains sucked at that rate, and declined their proposal. The meaning of these citizens in their first offer was kindly: they wished to inspire the artist with a proper confidence, and made

[1] Both these works still remain in Stafford House.

remuneration certain; but they could not resist the temptation of gain. They ought to have paid Bird the whole sum which they received, and not sought to enrich themselves under pretence of friendship. But neither the satire of poets nor individual parsimony must conceal the fact that Bristol took an affectionate interest in his prosperity, and that he found many friends and patrons amongst her citizens.

Business about this time took Bird to his native town. He was personally recognized by many, and received with an enthusiasm which would have been creditable to a place of higher pretensions. His early companions gathered about him, and he made them cordially welcome. Many of those persons survive, and they all, and of their own accord, when his name is mentioned, speak first of the active kindness of his heart, and then of the early indications of his talents. "I knew Ned Bird, sir," said one of those humble friends, "when he was a boy at school; he never thought of himself; he would give the one half of his dinner to a beggar-woman and the other to a lame soldier, and fast upon his lesson." Nor had increase of years hardened his heart. One night, as he was on his way to his lodging, a woman ran wildly out of a door, crying, "My child! my child!" Bird went into her house, and finding one of her children in strong convulsions, instantly brought a physician. "Look to the boy," said Bird, "and look also to the mother—she seems to need it much: I will pay for all." He returned next day, gave the poor widow a present of money, and when the child—which recovered only for a short time—died, he buried it at his own expense.

On his return to Bristol he recommenced his studies. His chief merit as an artist lay in natural and touching representations of homely and social things: history, either profane or sacred, required a spirit more in unison with the magnificent and the majestic, and an imagination of a more heroic order. He had *seen* the living nature which the former requires, and had taken frequent sittings: he had to *conceive* the nature which belongs to the latter and in that rare quality he was found deficient.

His picture of "Good News" is a happy performance. The group which he assembled in the little ale-house has, no doubt, recalled similar scenes to all who have observed it. "The Blacksmith's Shop," an early painting of much promise, was touched with the same spirit of social glee; and the "Country Auction" is ranked by many as one of his cleverest pictures. The sound of the auctioneer's hammer has called together a motley crowd, all anxious to bid for articles, and all bidding in character. An old grey-headed peasant has bought a large Bible; his son-in-law hesitates between a punch-bowl and a cradle; and his daughter sees nothing but the glitter of a tea-table service. A cautious gamekeeper and a bustling butcher are contending for a fowling-piece. A little girl has placed a burnished cullender above her curls, and eyes a mirror with much satisfaction; while a gaping crowd of rustic connoisseurs are examining, with all the empty sagacity of a committee of taste, into the merits of an old daub about to be exposed to sale. The colouring of the whole is mellow and harmonious.

Nor was he less skilful in subjects where the interest was confined to a single figure with little action. When he happened to meet an original-looking personage, young or old, his practice was to make a rude sketch on the spot —return to his study—assign to the figure some characteristic employment—expand it upon the canvas, and give it all the charm of colouring. He painted such works with astonishing rapidity: the picture existed complete in his mind, and an effort of art and memory reproduced it. During the stormy season of 1812 he was in London—found a famishing match-girl in the street—painted her in character in three days, and sold the work for thirty guineas. An old man seeking alms came across his way; of him he took a characteristic likeness—half real and half imaginative, and with equal success. Accurate copies of nature he disliked: he took a poetic licence with his subjects; he had a happy knack in combination, and formed clever and consistent groups out of very discordant materials. "He could," said one of his admirers, "extract delight and joy out of anything: I mean personally as

well as with his pencil." "The Gipsy Boy," "The Young Recruit," "Meg Merrilies," "Game at Put," and various other paintings are all instances of his skill in adapting living life to the purposes of art. In this respect he resembled Opie. When one of his friends congratulated him upon the rapidity with which he dashed off his lesser, but his happier works, Bird said, "Yes, I can do them quickly; but it will not do to tell the world how soon I can paint such things." They who believe that what is done well cannot have been done quickly, are often mistaken.

The reputation of these paintings recalled public attention to his earlier productions, and "The Village Politicians," a cabinet picture, and "The Poacher," in six scenes, came out of obscurity. In these six pictures he conducts a peasant from his happy fireside through the varied fortunes of a poacher's life: seeking for game with his companion; carrying it home to his wife and children; selling it by lamp-light to the guard of a coach; betrayed by his comrade; admonished by a clergyman in prison; and restored to his family an amended man with a resolution to be wise in future. I fear the poacher's career seldom terminates in a manner so pleasant to contemplate.

Some time during the year 1813, Bird obtained the notice of the Princess Charlotte, who, young as she was, perceived the true native excellence of his works, and expressed a wish to see the artist. He was introduced accordingly, at Warwick House, and was charmed, as all were, by the grace and kindly dignity of her manners. Encouraged by her courtesy, which had no chilling stateliness about it, he spoke readily and well, and acquitted himself so cleverly that Her Royal Highness took an opportunity of saying to Mr. Murphy, who introduced him, "Mr. Bird is a very well-bred man—he has a natural politeness about him." The Princess promised him her support, and appointed him her painter, on which he made her a present of a work he had lately finished—"The Surrender of Calais." This was a favourite production, and he desired, very properly, to place it in the best

company: alas! in that enviable situation it was not long to remain. That sad event happened which brought tears to all eyes, and of which one of our best poets has so mournfully sung.

> "In its summer pride arrayed,
> Low our Tree of Hope is laid!
> Low it lies;—in evil hour,
> Visiting the bridal bower,
> Death hath levelled root and flower;
> Windsor! in thy sacred shade,
> This the end of pomp and power!
> Have the rites of death been paid;
> Windsor! in thy sacred shade
> Is the Flower of Brunswick laid!"

On the death of our painter, his widow wished to exhibit his works, and applied to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg for a loan of "The Surrender of Calais:" the Prince did more than was asked, or expected, or indeed wished—he presented the painting to Mrs. Bird, accompanied by a donation of a hundred pounds.

During one of his visits to London, Bird sat for his bust to Chantrey; and the writer of this very imperfect account had thus many opportunities of conversing with him. He said he had no regular system of study; he painted or sketched just as it suited him, and when once he had sat resolutely down to his easel, it was no easy thing to make him quit it. The subject once settled, he generally painted fast, and when fastest, best. He wrought much by candle-light, and in this manner he painted his "Death of Eli." At this time Mr. Chantrey was busied with one of his cleverest works—the figure of Lady Louisa Russell—a child fondling a bird in her bosom, and standing on tip-toe with delight. As the sculptor was anxious to have it ready for the approaching Exhibition, he stuck a candle in the front of his hat, took a chisel in his hand, and laboured at the statue during the evenings. On one or more of those occasions, Bird was his companion. The light in the sculptor's hat glimmered as he moved his head amongst busts and groups, and statues—some emerging from the block, some rough-hewn, and others fully finished. The singular scene took the painter's fancy, and

he resolved to make a picture of it. I wish he had finished this very original design: he left it sketched in oil. Chantrey appears in the act of carving one of the hands of the figure, surrounded by his other works, over which there is shed a partial illumination. When the bust of Bird was finished, Skirving of Edinburgh, an artist of some talent and more eccentricity, paid the gallery of the sculptor a visit. He fixed his eye on the bust of the painter and said to the person who showed it, "Well—and who is that?" "It is Bird—Bird of Bristol." "Bird! what strange *bird* is he?" "He is an eminent painter." "Painter! and what does he paint?" "Ludicrous subjects, sir." "Ludicrous subjects! have you sat?" Upon this the other answered, "He has had one sitting; but when he heard that a gentleman with a white hat, and who wore no neckcloth had arrived from the North, he said, 'Go, go—I know of a subject more ludicrous still: Mr. Skirving is come.'"[1]

These visits to London, and his admiration of the historical pictures of the great painters, wrought a sore change on Bird: he forsook that style of art natural to his feelings, and dedicated his pencil to far other aspirations. He became affected with a kind of Scripture mania. He thought only of sublime passages in the Bible, and scenes of religious tragedy which the Reformation furnished. The "Fortitude of Job," the "Death of Sapphira," the "Crucifixion," and the "Burning of Ridley and Latimer," are amongst his latter works: they found admirers and purchasers. There is considerable talent in these paintings, and some pathos; but they are deficient in that regal loftiness of look which the subjects require, and without which merely clever works are but processions of puppets. "Our Redeemer's Atonement" had already been painted by higher hands, and the "Martyrdom of the Bishops" is a subject too horrible for any genius to render acceptable.

Those works having failed to yield fame to the artist in proportion to the toil they cost him, he filled up the

[1] "The other" mentioned here is evidently Cunningham himself, who thus set down his compatriot.—Ed.

measure of his sorrow by attempting what I may call the Political style of art. The times in which Bird lived teemed with events of vast importance: kings and thrones appeared and disappeared like figures in a disturbed dream; and the splendid sun of Napoleon was setting as it rose, in blood. We all remember, and many of us witnessed, the departure of Louis XVIII. from his English exile for Paris.[1] The painter had awakened a deep interest by his "Surrender of Calais:" he probably imagined that the further he came down the stream of national story, the more the interest of the subject would increase; and in an evil hour for his own happiness, he resolved to paint the "Embarkation of the French King and his Attendants."

Of this work—which proved to be his last—Bird soon made the sketch, and all that he wanted was the likeness of certain important personages. From Louis himself and his courtiers—men who, having suffered from oppression, had learned to be merciful—he received polite and kind attention. The old King praised the generous English, and the Duchess of Angouleme spoke highly to the honour of our ladies. But some of the nobles of his native land, whom he wished to introduce, were by no means so tractable to our artist; who seems indeed to have been but little skilled in the arts of courtly conciliation. They answered his applications very civilly, but day after day neglected to bestow on him the necessary sittings. His patience, and at length his health, failed him, after a sore trial of many months. The death of a son and a daughter, whom he tenderly loved, pressed grievously about the same period upon his feelings: he grew peevish and dejected, and a drooping look and unsteady step began to give notice that his days were numbered.

It is painful to think that the sensitive feelings of a man of genius should have been at the mercy of people thus unconscious or neglectful of its claims; but it is still more painful to think that he dedicated his time to processions and pageants, in which the likenesses of such ephemeral personages were necessary to his purpose. Bird slowly

[1] This, it must be remembered, was written nearly fifty years ago.—Ed.

sunk under the pressing misery of hope deferred, diplomatic excuses, and courtly delays; and on the 2nd day of November, 1819, felt no longer the insolence of office. He died in the forty-eighth year of his age, and was buried in the cloisters of Bristol Cathedral.

Three hundred gentlemen of Bristol joined in the funeral procession of their favourite painter, and when the grave received his remains they were so much affected with the sight of his son—a child of seven years old, who was there as chief mourner—that they requested leave to bear the expense of the interment. This Mrs. Bird, with modesty and good feeling, declined. A colder tale is, however, told, and even credited far from Bristol. Those three hundred gentlemen, it is said, obtained, with much entreaty, Mrs. Bird's permission to bury her husband with all the honours of the city and at their own expense. The scene was splendid, and many were the external symptoms of public woe; but when all was over, the undertaker presented his bill to the widow of the painter. If this story be true, the sarcasms of Savage and Lovell are merciful and kind—but I believe it rests on no sufficient authority.

Edward Bird was in stature below the middle size, his eyes were expressive, his smile particularly winning, and his whole look full of intelligence. He was an admirer of truth, loved good order in his family, and kept strict discipline amongst his children, who loved and feared him. The air of rusticity which hovered about his person wore off as he became animated in company: there was much about him to please and even captivate, and, what all men reverence, a perfect sincerity of heart. Towards the close of his life his looks grew dark and melancholy; but this was less the fault of his mind than of his fortune; he felt that the world of fashion which he had worshipped was making its own return—neglecting while it praised, and spurning while it caressed him.[1]

[1] Bird's experience was that of many other painters who have been unduly extolled beyond their real worth for a time, and then, the fashion for their works having gone out, as unduly perhaps neglected. There is one small picture by him in the National Gallery—"The Raffle for the

The early works of Bird have an original and unborrowed air, which marks an artist who thought for himself, and sought the materials for his pictures in the living world around him, rather than in the galleries of art. In these he was eminently happy, and his very success was the cause of his after sorrow. A swarm of counsellors came round, who persuaded him that fame was the satellite of fashion, and induced him to forsake the modest path to permanent reputation, and follow the will-o'-the-wisp of pageant-painting, which led to the slough of despond and to despair and the grave. Those who wish well to the fame of Edward Bird will speak of his paintings of humble life, and seek to forget, not only these mistaken efforts of his declining hand, but even his historical productions, with the single exception of "Chevy Chase."

Watch"—a scene in a country public house—which gives a fair idea of his talent. It affords an instructive commentary on contemporary criticism to find that Bird was at one time considered to rival Wilkie in his village scenes.—Ed.

HENRY FUSELI.

HENRY FUSELI—so he chose to spell his name, though his fathers wrote it Fuessli—first saw the light, by all accounts save his own, in the year 1741, at Zurich; but as he seldom wished to think like other men, so he refused to be born according to tradition or register books, and taking up a little German memoir of himself, changed the date from 1741 to 1745, without adding either day or month. He always spoke of his age with reluctance. Once when pressed about it he peevishly exclaimed, "How should I know? I was born in February or March—it was some cursed cold month, as you may guess from my diminutive stature and crabbed disposition." He was the second of eighteen children; his name pertains to Switzerland—all by which that name is distinguished to England.

The father, John Gaspard Fuessli, obtained some fame as a portrait and landscape painter. His taste for poetry procured him the friendship of Kleist, Klopstock, and Wieland; and from his "History of the Artists of Switzerland," his more eminent son drew some of the materials for an enlarged edition of Pilkington's "Dictionary of Painters." He was of the same family as that Matthias Fuessli, a painter of Zurich, who studied in Venice, and died in 1665, of whom Henry gives this brief character:—"His extensive talent was checked by the freaks of an ungovernable fancy—his subjects in general were battles, towns pillaged, conflagrations, and storms." There is a kindred likeness here. The maiden name of Henry's mother was Elizabeth Waser; he loved to speak of her, and attributed much of his knowledge to her instructions—she died when he was eighteen years old. His father, a scholar and an artist, had probably experienced some of the

sorrows common to both characters, and, desirous that his son should at least have bread, proposed to educate him for the church. The wayward temper of the boy, and his already enthusiastic love of painting, opposed strong obstacles to this sensible plan, and the father, with much of his own wilfulness of spirit, resolved to enforce obedience. For a while he was successful. Henry made great progress in learning—having overleaped the first difficulties, he became an ardent devourer of the classics; but it was only or chiefly to find, in the poetry of Greece and Rome, vivid images of heroic life and daring flights of imagination.

The time which the school demanded was thus spent by one who could do in minutes what would have cost his fellows hours; for the rest of the day he had other occupation. As soon as he was released from his class, he withdrew to a secret place to enjoy unmolested the works of Michael Angelo, of whose prints his father had a fine collection. He loved when he grew old to talk of those days of his youth, of the enthusiasm with which he surveyed the works of his favourite masters, and the secret pleasure which he took in acquiring forbidden knowledge. With candles which he stole from the kitchen, and pencils which his pocket-money was hoarded to procure, he pursued his studies till late at night, and made many copies from Michael Angelo and Raphael, by which he became familiar thus early with the style and ruling character of the two greatest masters of the art. The wild old work, called "Howleglas," caught his fancy, and he illustrated it with outlines, representing the ludicrous gambols of a motley jester, with the strange dances and mischievous tricks of fantastic imps and elves. The chief character in this strange book, which was once as popular in England as in Germany, is Howleglas himself—a personage corresponding with the Lord of Misrule of Scotland, so well described by Sir Walter Scott. "The mock dignitary was a stout-made under-sized fellow, whose thick-squab form had been rendered grotesque by a supplemental paunch well stuffed. He wore a mitre of leather with a front like a grenadier's cap, adorned with mock embroidery and trinkets of tin. This surmounted a visage the nose of which was the most

prominent feature, being of unusual size, and at least as richly gemmed as his head-gear. His robe was of buckram, and his cape of canvas, curiously painted and cut into open work. On one shoulder was fixed the painted figure of an owl, and he bore in the right hand his pastoral staff, and in the left a small mirror, having a handle to it, thus resembling a celebrated jester, whose adventures translated into English were once extremely popular." The illustrations of Fuseli were in the spirit of the book, and it is a right facetious one—abounding with practical jokes, many of which the young artist very cleverly embodied. Etchings of these early attempts were afterwards published, and are now exceedingly rare; they are said not to be without merit, and to show, as the poet says, that "the boy is father of the man." His schoolfellows perceived his talents—some of them purchased his works—and he presently found himself with more money in his pocket than he knew well what to do with. The taste of our youth was decidedly in favour of whatever is staring and extravagant. He bought a piece of flame-coloured silk, had it made into a coat, and in this splendid attire marched up the streets of Zurich; but the laughter and mockery of his companions put him into such a passion that he soon threw off the garment and vowed never to be fine again.

With this twofold taste for literature and art upon him, Fuseli was placed—I know not at what age—in the Humanity College of Zurich, of which two distinguished men, Bodmer and Breitenger, were professors. Here he became the bosom companion of that amiable enthusiast, Lavater, studied English, and conceived such a love for the works of Shakespeare, that he translated Macbeth into German. The writings of Wieland and Klopstock influenced his youthful fancy, and from Shakespeare he extended his affection to the chief masters in English literature. His love of poetry was natural, not affected—he practised at an early age the art which he admired through life, and some of his first attempts at composition were pieces in his native language, which made his name known in Zurich.

Like some other youthful poets, he was also a reformer. In conjunction with Lavater he composed a pamphlet against a ruler in one of the bailiwicks, who had abused his powers, and perhaps personally insulted the two friends. The peasantry, it seems, conceiving themselves oppressed by their superior, complained and petitioned; the petitions were read by young Fuseli and his companion, who, stung with indignation at the tale of tyranny disclosed, expressed their feelings in a satire, which made a great stir in the city. Threats were publicly used against the authors, who were guessed at, but not known; upon which they distributed placards in every direction, offering to prove before a tribunal the accusations they had made. Nay, Fuseli actually appeared before the magistrates—named the offender boldly—arraigned him with great vehemence and eloquence, and was applauded by all and answered by none. Pamphlets and accusations were probably uncommon things in Zurich; in some other countries they would have dropped from the author's hands harmless or unheeded, but the united labours of Fuseli and Lavater drove the unjust magistrate into exile and procured remuneration to those who had suffered. Of this wonder-working production I can give no further account. It made Fuseli, in all likelihood, few friends; we are certain that it brought him enemies, who were powerful enough to make their anger be felt, and finally succeeded in inducing the young genius to quit Zurich.

With a reputation for scholarship, poetry, painting, and patriotism, and the degree of Master of Arts attached to his name, Fuseli bade farewell to his father's house, and travelled, in company with Lavater, to Berlin, where he placed himself under the care of Sulzer, author of the "Lexicon of the Fine Arts."[1] His talents and learning obtained him the friendship of several distinguished men, and his acquaintance with English poetry induced Professor Sulzer to select him as one well qualified for opening

[1] He appears to have adopted art as a profession during his short stay at Berlin, for while in that city he executed eight illustrations to Boelmer's work the "Noachide."—Ed.

a communication between the literature of Germany and that of England. Sir Andrew Mitchell, British Ambassador at the Prussian court, was consulted; and pleased with his lively genius, and his translations and drawings from "Macbeth" and "Lear," received Fuseli with much kindness, and advised him to visit Britain. Lavater, who till now had continued his companion, presented him at parting with a card, on which he had inscribed in German, "Do but the tenth part of what you can do." "Hang that up at your bed-head," said the physiognomist, "obey it, and fame and fortune will be the result."

If we trust the register of Zurich, Fuseli was in his twenty-second year when he appeared in England in 1763; but if we prefer his own statement as to the time of his birth, he was but eighteen—a tender age for obtaining the notice of ambassadors, and too young, surely, and inexperienced for opening a communication between two great nations in a matter of literature: yet his behaviour on arriving in this great Babylon may seem to countenance his own story. "When I stood in London," said he, "and considered that I did not know one soul in all this vast metropolis, I became suddenly impressed with a sense of forlornness, and burst into a flood of tears. An incident restored me. I had written a long letter to my father, giving him an account of my voyage, and expressing my filial affection —now not weakened by distance—and with this letter in my hand, I inquired of a rude fellow whom I met, the way to the Post Office. My foreign accent provoked him to laughter, and as I stood cursing him in good Shakesperian English, a gentleman kindly directed me to the object of my inquiry." The embarrassment and tears thus described may strike many as suiting better the milkiness of eighteen than the firmer manhood of twenty-two.[1]

After he reached London, we hear no more of the channel of communication which Professor Sulzer employed him to open between the literature of Britain and that of

[1] Fuseli's first lodgings in London were in Cranbourne Alley, where Hogarth also had first established himself. The alley has been swept away by modern improvements.—Ed.

Germany. In what manner this was to be accomplished I can find no account; he had common letters of credit to Coutts the banker, and friendly introductions to Johnson, Millar, and Cadell, the booksellers, who all received him with kindness; but he was made acquainted with no man of influence or genius, and had to seek his way into such society as he might. His friends the booksellers obtained for him the situation of tutor to the son of some nobleman, whom he accompanied to Paris.[1] This employment suited ill with the fiery impatience and untamable enthusiasm of Fuseli. He loved not to tell the name of his pupil, nor allude to the success of his labours, nor was he willing, it is said, to have the matter mentioned. His governorship is supposed to have been short: and he returned to London to dedicate his pen to the daily toils of literature—to translations, essays, and critiques. Of such pieces he wrote nearly an hundred, but acknowledged none save a translation of Winckelmann's work on painting and sculpture; and it required some nerve to make that acknowledgment, for the book, as has been mentioned in the life of Barry, advocates the doctrine that British genius is unequal to the task of making noble works of art—a notion which, however absurd, seems to have sometimes possessed Fuseli himself. The book, which Barry so bitterly answered, excited no general attention here. It is a part of the English temper to listen to such fantastic assailants with exasperating indifference.

Fuseli afterwards tried his skill on more inflammable materials—he precipitated himself into the angry controversy then raging between Voltaire and Rousseau. "Fuseli," said Bonnycastle to him one day after dinner, "you can write well, why don't you write something?" "Something!" exclaimed the other. "You always cry write—Fuseli, write!—blastation! what shall I write?" "Write," said Armstrong, who was present, "write on the Voltaire and Rousseau *Row—there* is a subject!"

[1] His pupil was Viscount Chewton, son of the Earl of Waldegrave. It is said that master and pupil managed to come to blows, and the former left the latter in France, determining "to be a bear-leader no longer."—Ed.

He said nothing—but went home and began to write. The enthusiasm of his hatred or his love enabled him to compose his Essay with uncommon rapidity, and he printed it forthwith, in the hope that it would fly abroad to exalt Rousseau and confound Voltaire. "It had," said one of his friends, "a short life, and a bright ending." The whole impression caught fire, and either angry philosopher lived and died in ignorance whether the future professor of painting in England was his friend or his enemy. Fuseli was afterwards much ashamed of this production, and scarcely counted the man his friend who alluded to it. Armstrong, the poet, his constant associate, had once the boldness to tax him in company with having written it—Fuseli kindled up "like fire to heather set," and poured out his fury in both English and German. This calmed him—he then argued that his friend had no right to couple his name with such a work—but he did not deny it.

Though thus busied with tutorships and translations, he had not forgotten his early attachment to art. He found his way to the studio of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and submitted several of his drawings to the President's examination, who looked at them for some time, and then said, "How long have you studied in Italy?" "I never studied in Italy—I studied at Zurich—I am a native of Switzerland—do you think I should study in Italy? and, above all, is it worth while?" "Young man," said Reynolds, "were I the author of these drawings, and were offered ten thousand a year *not* to practise as an artist, I would reject the proposal with contempt." This very favourable opinion from one who considered all he said, and was so remarkable for accuracy of judgment, decided the destiny of Fuseli; he forsook for ever the hard and thankless *trade* of literature—refused a living in the Church from some patron who had been struck with his talents—and addressed himself to painting with heart and hand.

The first effort of his pencil was "Joseph interpreting the Dreams of Pharaoh's Chief Baker and Butler."[1] I

[1] Reynolds, on seeing this work, is said to have further encouraged him by remarking that "the artist might, if he would, be a colourist as

have been unable to learn how this work was executed or received; there was probably no contention for it among the patrons of art, since Johnson the bookseller became the purchaser. It hung in his house till it became cracked and faded, when Fuseli took it home to lay what he called "the villanous clutch of restoration upon it." The attempt was probably never made, and the picture was lost or destroyed. He had now lived eight years in England, and was in the thirtieth year of his age; his enthusiasm was unbounded, his learning great, his imagination of a high order, and much was expected from his zeal and talents, on whatever field he might ultimately fix them.

At this period his literary compositions were wonderfully free from the peculiarities which mark the writings of foreigners. They have much the air of being written with the scrupulous fastidiousness of one conscious of the sins most likely to beset him, and anxiously avoiding the enthusiasm as well as the idioms of the German style. Perhaps those for whom he wrote such desultory communications, had shown him with a wet pen how to sober down the poetic aspirations of his vein, and finding resistance unprofitable, he submitted the full-blown flowers of his fancy to the editorial scythe with composure. But when eminence in art brought him into notice, he resumed the original licence of his pen, and hazarded freer thoughts, and took bolder liberties with language. His German nature prevailed a little against his English education. And it cannot be denied that it infused a dash of poetic fervour into his lectures and critical compositions.

His wit, and learning, and talent in art, gained him early admission to the company of the wealthy and the distinguished, and such was the varied power of his conversation, that he never met a stranger without impressing him with a respect for his genius and a dread of his ridicule. His poetic talents were of no ordinary kind, and his poems, written in his native language, are deficient, I have heard, neither in force nor in fire—though occasionally deformed

well as a draughtsman." Fuseli, however, never attained any proficiency in the use of colour.—Ed.

by bad taste. His attempts in English verse are rude and unmelodious—distinguished by harsh, rugged vigour

The sketches and drawings of Fuseli were of a higher order than the works of his pen, and as art speaks an universal language, they were free from those deformities which are so visible in his writings. They exhibited a deep poetic feeling, acquaintance with the poets and historians of old, and a perfect sense of the heroic action and sentiment which the noblest line of art requires. Armstrong the poet, his friend and counseller, was not insensible of their excellence, when he joined in persuading him to woo the muse of painting alone. He no sooner formed this resolution than he determined to visit Rome. Armstrong accompanied him, and both used to relate that whilst they were descanting on the glories of the Eternal City and the splendour of ancient sculpture and modern poetry, their reveries were suddenly interrupted by the grounding of the vessel. This happened near Genoa, they took to their boats, landed in safety—quarrelled on the road to Rome, and separated in no good mood at Florence. The poet went his own way, and Fuseli hastened to the capital of art.[1]

He had from his boyhood admired Michael Angelo in engravings, and he adored him now in his full and undiminished majesty. It was a story which he loved to repeat, how he lay on his back day after day, and week succeeding week, with upturned and wondering eyes, musing at the splendid ceiling of the Sistine Chapel—on the unattainable grandeur of the Florentine. He sometimes, indeed, added that such a posture of repose was necessary for a body fatigued like his with the pleasant gratifications of a luxurious city. He imagined, at all events, that he drank in as he lay, the spirit of the sublime Michael, and that by studying in the Sistine, he had the full advantage of the mantle of inspiration suspended visibly above him. The flighty imagination of Fuseli required a soberer master; the wings of his fancy were a little too strong, sometimes, for his judgment, and brought upon him the reproach of extravagance

[1] He arrived in Rome in the spring of 1770.—Ed.

—an error so rare in British art that it almost becomes a virtue. He was no idle votary, for he strove to imitate; he was no ignorant admirer, for he thus praises his great master:—

"Sublimity of conception, grandeur of form, and breadth of manner, are the elements of Michael Angelo's style. By these principles he selected or rejected the objects of imitation. As painter, as sculptor, as architect, he attempted—and, above any other man, succeeded—to unite magnificence of plan and endless variety of subordinate parts with the utmost simplicity and breadth. His line is uniformly grand; character and beauty were admitted only so far as they could be made subservient to grandeur; the child, the female, meanness, deformity, were by him indiscriminately stamped with grandeur. A beggar rose from his hand the patriarch of poverty; the hump of his dwarf is impressed with dignity; his women are moulds of generation; his infants teem with the man; his men are a race of giants. This is the 'Terribil via' hinted at by Agostino Caracci, though perhaps as little understood by the Bolognese as by the blindest of his Tuscan adorers, with Vasari at their head. He is the inventor of epic painting in that sublime circle of the Sistine Chapel which exhibits the origin, progress, and final dispensation of Theocracy. He has personified motion in the groups of the Cartoon of Pisa; embodied sentiment in the monuments of St. Lorenzo; unravelled the features of meditation in the prophets and sibyls of the Chapel of Sixtus; and in the 'Last Judgment,' with every attitude that varies the human body, traced the master trait of every human passion that sways the human heart. Though as sculptor he expresses the character of flesh more perfectly than all that came before or after him, yet he never submitted to copy an individual, Julius the Second only excepted, and in him he represented the reigning passion rather than the man. In painting he contented himself with negative colour, and as the painter of mankind, rejected all meretricious ornament. The fabric of St. Peter, scattered into infinity of jarring parts by Bramanti and his successors, he concentrated, suspended the cupola, and to

the most complex gave the air of the most simple of edifices."

This character carries the image of the author's mind; the style, however, is clearer, and the expression less complicated or obscure than was common with Fuseli. No unimaginative dauber ever hid his ignorance of anatomy under drapery, more effectually than this remarkable man could veil ordinary thoughts under colossal words. The reader will thank me for transcribing also the following portrait of Leonardi da Vinci:—

"Leonardo da Vinci broke forth with a splendour which distanced former excellence; made up of all the elements which constitute the essence of genius; favoured by education and circumstances; all ear, all eye, all grasp; painter, poet, sculptor, anatomist, architect, engineer, chemist, machinist, man of science, and sometimes empiric, he laid hold of every beauty in the enchanted circle—but without exclusive attachment to one, dismissed in her turn each. Fitter to scatter hints than teach by example, he wasted life insatiate in experiment. To a capacity which at once penetrated the principle and real aim of art, he joined an inequality of fancy that at one moment lent him wings for the pursuit of beauty, and the next flung him on the ground to crawl after deformity: we owe him chiaro-oscuro with all its magic; we owe him caricature with all its incongruities. His notions of the most elaborate finish, and his want of perseverance were at least equal. Want of perseverance alone could make him abandon his Cartoon, destined for the great council-chamber at Florence, of which the celebrated contest of horsemen was but one group; for to him who could organize that composition, Michael Angelo himself ought rather to have been an object of emulation than of fear."

Fuseli seldom thought with sober feelings upon either art or literature, and he delighted to invest the objects of his love with the brightness of heaven—those of his hate with the hues of utter darkness. He poured out his admiration in words which he wished to thunder and lighten; his irony stung like an adder, and his sarcasm cut like a two-edged sword. As he claims attention in writing as well as

in painting, I shall quote a third passage, where his skill in the former art aided him in expressing his feelings concerning the latter.

"The inspiration of Michael Angelo was followed by the milder genius of Raphael—the father of dramatic painting—the painter of humanity; less elevated, less vigorous, but more insinuating; more pressing on our hearts; the warm master of our sympathies. What effect of human connection—what feature of the mind, from the gentlest emotion to the most fervid burst of passion, has been left unobserved—has not received a characteristic stamp from that examiner of men? Michael Angelo came to nature—nature came to Raphael—he transmitted her features like a lucid glass—unstained, unmodified. We stand with awe before Michael Angelo, and tremble at the height to which he elevates us. We embrace Raphael, and follow him wherever he leads us. Perfect human beauty he has not represented. No face of Raphael's is perfectly beautiful—no figure of his, in the abstract, possesses the proportions which could raise it to a standard of imitation; form to him was only a vehicle of character or pathos; and to those he adapted it, in a mode and with a truth that leave all attempts at emendation hopeless. His invention connects the utmost stretch of possibility with the most plausible degree of probability in a way that equally surprises our fancy, persuades our judgment, and affects our heart. His composition always hastens to the most necessary point as its centre, and from that disseminates—to that leads back as rays, all secondary ones. Group, form, and contrast are subordinate to the event, and commonplace is ever excluded. The line of Raphael has been excelled in correctness, elegance, and energy; his colour far surpassed in tone, in truth and harmony, his masses, in roundness, and his chiaro-oscuro in effect; but considered as instruments of pathos, they have never been equalled; and in composition, invention, expression, and the power of telling a story, he has never been approached."

Of Correggio he writes with the same power and discrimination. "Another charm was yet wanting," he says, "to complete the round of art—harmony: it appeared with

Antonio Allegri, called Correggio, whose works it attended like an enchanted spirit. The harmony and the grace of Correggio are proverbial; the medium which by breadth of gradation unites two opposite principles, the coalition of light and darkness by imperceptible transition, are the elements of his style. This inspires his figures with grace —to this their grace is subordinate: the most appropriate. —the most elegant attitudes were adopted—rejected— perhaps sacrificed to the most awkward ones, in compliance with this imperious principle: parts vanished, were absorbed, or emerged in obedience to it. This unison of a whole predominates over all that remains of him, from the vastness of his cupolas to the smallest of his oil pictures. The harmony of Correggio, though assisted by exquisite hues, was entirely independent of colour; his great organ was Chiaro-oscuro, in its most extensive sense; compared with the expanse in which it floats, the effects of Leonardi da Vinci are little more than the dying ray of evening, and the concentrated flash of Giorgione discordant abruptness. The bland central light of a globe, imperceptibly gliding through lucid demi-tints into rich reflected shades, composes the spell of Correggio, and affects us with the soft emotions of a delicious dream."

Such are the characters which Fuseli drew with his pen of those four illustrious artists.[1] The calm dignity, the solemn grace and tranquil divinity of Raphael, affected him less than the vigorous, energetic, and startling productions of Michael Angelo. The works of the latter were indeed more akin to the fancy of Fuseli, which loved, like a meteor, to shine upon impassable places, and light the darkness of that region which forms the border-land between sense and absurdity. The mental radiance which Raphael shed so largely upon his compositions was inferior, in the opinion of this new student of the grand

[1] His style of writing, it will be seen, was as exaggerated and distorted as his art. He could not express his thoughts in simple language, but tried to make them appear profound by involving them in dark speech. Much of his art criticism, when analyzed, is found to be contradictory nonsense. His rapid judgments of men and things in his talk evince, on the contrary, much shrewd sense.—Ed.

style, to the muscular glory of his great rival. Fuseli had little sympathy with gentleness and repose: he thought there was no dignity without action—no sublimity without exaggeration. He fulfilled the injunctions of Reynolds—he ate and drank, and slept and waked upon Michael Angelo.[1] By a wiser course of study he might have schooled down his imagination; but he shunned the calmer company of Correggio and Raphael to quaff wine from the cup of the Polyphemus of modern art. He lived in a species of intoxication—affected the dress and mimicked the manners of Michael—assumed the historic shoe, and would have preferred the sandal. In drawing and in sketching he tried to imitate his master's dashing energy and extravagance of breadth, which induced Pianesi to exclaim "Fuseli—this is not designing, but building a man!" When time had mellowed his taste, and in his turn he had become an instructor, he continued to prefer that broad, nervous freedom of hand, and held in derision all that was cautiously neat or timidly graceful. He would seize the chalks of the students, stamp with his tiny foot till they stared or smiled,—cry "See!" and delineate a man in half the time and with a broader stroke than a tailor uses in chalking out a garment. Yet coarse as such hasty outlines seemed to the inexperienced, in the view of those acquainted with design, they contained the elements of the truest art, and presented such materials for study as none but the hand of a master could dash off.

Of his studies in the numerous galleries of Italy he has left a minute account. He refused to follow the common method of laboriously copying the chief pictures of the great masters, with the hope of carrying away their spirit as well as the image of their works. He sought to animate his own compositions by contemplating rather than transcribing theirs. To his sketches he added observations with his pen; they are rapturous about all that is

[1] This fervent study of Michael Angelo was probably the ruin of his art, which might have been fancifully original but for his passion for the great Italian master. Few can walk on the heights with Michael Angelo without dizziness, and trying to do so filled poor Fuseli's brain with vain phantasms which he fondly imagined to be real living forms.—ED.

lofty, nor are they deficient either in the shrewdness which penetrates, or the wisdom which weighs. He loved to dream along the road—to follow the phantasies of an unbridled imagination—to pen sarcastic remarks—sketch colossal groups, and would call out ever and anon, when some strange thought struck him, "Michael Angelo!" His company was eagerly courted by all who wished to be thought wise or witty; and with the English gentry, who then, as now, swarmed in Rome, he formed friendships which were useful in after life.

How Fuseli supported himself abroad during eight years of study, he has not told us; his family were respectable, not opulent; his attempts with the pen had enabled him to live without making his purse overflow, and as his paintings were few, it has been supposed that the income arising from his own exertions was but little. It is now ascertained that such was his winning way in conversation, and such even then the acknowledged powers of his pencil, that from English travellers alone he had at one time commissions to the amount of £1,300. Some of his letters from Rome have a laconic brevity which amuses those whom they fail to inform; others breathe of a sadness of heart and depression of spirit, such as the sons of genius are commonly heirs to.

"I am inexcusable, Madam," he thus writes to Miss Moser. "I know your letter by heart, and have never answered it: but I am often so very unhappy within, that I hold it a matter of remorse to distress such a friend as Miss Moser with my own whimsical miseries:—they may be fancied evils, but to him who has fancy, real evils are unnecessary, though I have them too. All I can say is, that I am approaching that period which commonly decides a man's life with regard to fame or infamy: if I am distracted by the thought, those who have passed the Rubicon will excuse me, and you are amongst the number. Madam, your most obliged servant and friend—Fuseli."

In 1774 he sent to the British exhibition a drawing of the "Death of Cardinal Beaufort," and three years after a "Scene from Macbeth," both marked by much boldness and originality. His mind loved to range with Shake-

speare and Milton—the Satan of the latter, majestic even in ruin, was a favourite study, and he imagined no one save himself could body him forth in all his terror and glory; "The Tempest," and "A Midsummer Night's Dream" contained images no less congenial, and he had already filled his portfolio with designs worthy of the wand of Prospero or the spells of Puck. His imagination, though he seemed not aware of it, was essentially Gothic; his mind dwelt with the poetry and the superstitions of Christendom; he talked about, but seldom drew, the gods and goddesses of Olympus.

In the year 1778 Fuseli left Italy with commissions for pictures in his pocket to a large amount; commissions, most of which, I grieve to say it, were afterwards ungenerously withdrawn. Such fickle patrons are not uncommon in the history of British art—the meanness of the great and the sordidness of the wealthy pressed sorely upon Fuseli, soured his temper, and brought on those fits of despondency which are the surest inheritance of the imaginative. He paid a visit to his native Zurich, and lived six months with his father, whom he loved tenderly.[1] His elder brother, Rodolph, had settled in Vienna, and become librarian to the emperor, and his brother Caspar died in the prime of life, after having distinguished himself by several skilful compositions on entomology. Early in 1779 he left Zurich, to which he never returned, and came back to London with his mind strengthened in knowledge, and his hand improved in its cunning. With the reputation of an eight years' residence in Rome upon him, he commenced his professional career, and the beginning was auspicious.

Thus stood art at that time in England. Reynolds excelled all men in portraiture, and wrought unrivalled and alone. Wilson and Gainsborough sufficed for the moderate measure of public demand in landscape. Barry and West shared between them the wide empire of religious and historic composition, and there was nothing left for

[1] During this time he painted for his native city, "The Confederacy of the Founders of Helvetian Liberty," a picture still preserved in the senate-house of Zurich.—ED.

Fuseli save the poetical. Nature had endowed him eminently for this field, and the nation showed symptoms of an awakening regard for it. No preceding painter had possessed himself of the high places of British verse. The enthusiasm for Milton, and especially for Shakespeare, was warmer and also more intelligent than at any former time, and Fuseli was considered by himself and by many friends as destined to turn this state of feeling to excellent account.

The first work which proved that an original mind had appeared in England, was the "Nightmare," exhibited in 1782. "The extraordinary and peculiar genius which it displayed," says one of his biographers, "was universally felt, and perhaps no single picture ever made a greater impression in this country. A very fine mezzotinto engraving of it was scraped by Raphael Smith, and so popular did the print become, that, although Mr. Fuseli received only twenty guineas for the picture, the publisher made five hundred by his speculation." This was a subject suitable to the unbridled fancy of the painter, and perhaps to no other imagination has the Fiend which murders our sleep ever appeared in a more poetical shape.

Though the "Nightmare" was the work which caught the public fancy most, the "Œdipus and his Daughters"—a work of a far higher order, was the first which he exhibited on his return from Rome. This is, indeed, a picture of singular power, full of feeling and terror. The desolate old man is seated on the ground, and his whole frame seems inspired with a presentiment of the coming vengeance of Heaven. His daughters are clasping him wildly, and the sky seems mustering the thunder and fire in which the tragic bard has made him disappear. "Pray, sir, what is that old man afraid of?" said some one to Fuseli when the picture was exhibited. "Afraid, Sir," exclaimed the painter, "why, afraid of going to hell!"

His rising fame, his poetic feeling, his great knowledge, and his greater confidence, now induced Fuseli to commence an undertaking worthy of the highest genius—the Shakespeare Gallery. An accidental conversation at the table of the nephew of Alderman Boydell, started, it is

said, the idea; and West and Romney and Hayley shared with Fuseli in the honour. But to the mind of the latter, such a scheme had been long present; it dawned on his fancy in Rome, even as he lay on his back marvelling in the Sistine, and he saw in imagination a long and shadowy succession of pictures. He figured to himself a magnificent temple, and filled it, as the illustrious artists of Italy did the Sistine, with pictures from his favourite poet. All was arranged according to character. In the panels and accessories were the figures of the chief heroes and heroines—on the extensive walls were delineated the changes of many-coloured life, the ludicrous and the sad—the pathetic and the humorous—domestic happiness and heroic aspirations—while the dome which crowned the whole exhibited scenes of higher emotion—the joys of heaven—the agonies of hell—all that was supernatural and all that was terrible. This splendid piece of imagination was cut down to working dimensions by the practised hands of Boydell, who supported the scheme anxiously and effectually. On receiving £500 Reynolds entered, though with reluctance, into an undertaking which consumed time and required much thought: but Fuseli had no rich commissions in the way—his heart was with the subject—in his own fancy he had already commenced the work, and the enthusiastic alderman found a more enthusiastic painter, who made no preliminary stipulations, but prepared his palette and began.

Shakespeare presented an entire world to the eye of art; and to embody the whole or any considerable portion of his visions would demand a combination of powers not to be hoped for. As might have been expected, Fuseli grappled with the wildest passages of the most imaginative plays; and he handled them with a kind of happy and vigorous extravagance which startled common beholders.

The "Tempest," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "King Lear," and "Hamlet," suggested the best of the eight Shakespearian pictures which he painted, and of these, that from "Hamlet" is certainly the noblest. It is, indeed, strangely wild and superhuman—if ever a Spirit visited earth, it must have appeared to Fuseli. The ma-

jesty of buried Denmark is no vulgar ghost such as scares the belated rustic, but a sad and majestic shape with the port of a god; to imagine this, required poetry, and in that our artist was never deficient. He had fine taste in matters of high import; he drew the boundary line between the terrible and the horrible, and he never passed it; the former he knew was allied to grandeur, the latter to deformity and disgust. An eminent metaphysician visited the gallery before the public exhibition; he saw the "Hamlet's Ghost" of Fuseli, and exclaimed, like Burns's rustic in "Hallowe'en," "Lord preserve me!" He declared that it haunted him round the room.

Two of these pictures merit a more detailed account—the "Infant Shakespeare" and the "Titania." The first is a fine piece of imagination introductory to the series of paintings, and the other is scarcely less so, though professing only to embody a particular passage of the great poet. In the "Infant Shakespeare," Tragedy is represented, a beautiful and mournful dame, nursing in her bosom the young dramatist; she seems exhausted by her maternal indulgence, and the child—his lips moist with milk and his eyes beaming with inspiration and health—appears anxious to quit her bosom for that of Comedy—a more youthful and gladsome lady, who with loose locks and looser attire —with laughing eyes and feet made to do nothing but dance, has begun to toy and talk with him. Around this group the painter has summoned the various characters which the poet afterwards created. Lady Constance is there with her settled sorrow—Lady Macbeth exhibits herself in that sleeping scene to which a Siddons has added terrors all her own; the three weird sisters—those black and midnight hags—appear dim but well defined. Falstaff too is there, a hogshead of a man with a tun of wit: and Caliban, a strange creation—a connecting link between man and brute—comes grovelling forward to look at his creator. Over the whole glares Hamlet's Ghost, throwing a sort of supernatural halo upon all around. The mask of Othello lies in the robe of Tragedy, and Queen Mab and one of her merriest comrades are sporting in Shakespeare's cradle.

The "Titania" is more exclusively comic, and can be compared to nothing more aptly than to the "Strolling Actresses" of Hogarth—it overflows with elvish fun and imaginative drollery. It professes to embody that portion of the first scene in the fourth act, where the spell-blinded queen caresses Bottom the weaver, on whose shoulders Oberon's transforming wand has placed an ass's head. Titania, a gay and alluring being, attended by her troop of fairies, is endeavouring to seem as lovely as possible in the sight of her lover, who holds down his head and assumes the air of the most stupid of all creatures. One almost imagines that her ripe round lips are uttering the well known words,—

> "Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
> While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
> And stick musk roses in thy sleek smooth head,
> And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy."

The rout and revelry which the fancy of the painter has poured around this spell-bound pair, baffle all description. All is mirthful, tricksy, and fantastic. Sprites of all looks and all hues—of all "dimensions, shapes, and mettles," —the dwarfish elf and the elegant fay—Cobweb commissioned to kill a red-hipped humble bee on the top of a thistle, that Bottom might have the honey-bag—Pease-Blossom, who had the less agreeable employment of scratching the weaver's head—and that individual fairy who could find the haunt of the squirrel and carry away his nuts—with a score of equally merry companions are swarming everywhere and in full employment. Pease-Blossom, a fairy of dwarfish stature, stands on tiptoe in the hollow of Bottom's hand, endeavouring to reach his nose—his fingers almost touch, he is within a quarter of an inch of scratching, but it is evident he can do no more, and his new master is too much of an ass to raise him up. The paintings which composed the Shakespeare Gallery were supplied by various hands; the plan was new, and novelty seldom fails to attract the multitude; but the multitude cannot be supposed to have much sympathy with works of a purely poetic order. There must be a strong

infusion of the grosser realities of life to secure extensive popularity: any rustic can feel the merits of John Gilpin, but what can such a person comprehend of the Penseroso? Much as the Shakespeare Gallery was praised, its excellence therefore was not felt by the people at large. The superiority of Fuseli in poetic conception over all his compeers was, however, appreciated by the few, on whose approbation alone he placed any value.

Those pictures were followed by others, all of a poetic order—Dante's "Inferno" suggested the "Francesco and Paolo"—Virgil supplied him with "Dido," from Sophocles he took Œdipus devoting his son, and from Boccaccio the "Theodore and Honorio." Concerning this latter picture Fuseli used to say, "Look at it—it is connected with the first patron I had." He then proceeded to relate how Cipriani had undertaken to paint for Horace Walpole a scene from Boccaccio's "Theodore and Honorio," familiar to all in the splendid translation of Dryden, and, after several attempts, finding the subject too heavy for his handling, he said to Walpole, "I cannot please myself with a sketch from this most imaginative of Gothic fictions, but I know one who can do the story justice—a man of great powers, of the name of Fuseli." "Let me see this painter of yours," said the other. Fuseli was sent for, and soon satisfied Walpole that his imagination was equal to the task of painting a splendid picture. He entertained till the hour of his death a regard for Cipriani. Those works were all marked by poetic freedom of thought and by more than poetic extravagance of action. They astonished many whom they could not please, and the name of Fuseli was spread over the island and heard of in foreign lands. He was elected an Associate of the Academy in 1788, and early in 1790 became an academician —honours won by talent without the slightest co-operation of intrigue. His election was nevertheless unpleasant to Reynolds, who desired to introduce Bonomi the architect. Fuseli, to soothe the President, waited on him and said, "I wish to be elected an academician. I have been disappointed hitherto by the deceit of pretended friends—shall I offend you if I offer myself next election?" "Oh,

no," said Sir Joshua with a kindly air, "no offence to me; but you cannot be elected this time—we must have an architect in." "Well, well," said Fuseli, who could not conceive how an architect could be a greater acquisition to the Academy than himself—"Well, well, you say I shall not offend you by offering myself, so I must make a trial." The result has been related in the life of Reynolds.

In the year 1788, he had taken a house in Queen Anne Street East, with a suitable gallery and studio, and married Sophia Rawlins. She proved a kind and faithful wife, who soothed him in moments of irritation, loved him warmly, and worshipped his genius. Higher birth and more delicate breeding might not have done more for him. She was handsome in youth, nor was she much faded when Opie painted her portrait. She was a woman of discretion too as well as of kindly feelings, and had what ladies call "trials." These must be described, as they are interwoven closely with the character of her husband.

At the table of Johnson the bookseller, Fuseli was a frequent guest, and in all conversations that passed there was lord of the ascendant. There he met his friend Armstrong, who praised him in the journals, Wolcot, whom he hated, and Mary Wolstonecraft, who at the first interview conferred upon him the honour of her love. The French Revolution was at that time giving hopes to the young and fears to the old. Fuseli was slightly smitten; but the cap of liberty itself seemed to have fallen on the heart as well as the head of the lady, who conducted herself as if it were absurd to doubt that the new order of things had loosened all the old moral obligations, and that marriage was but one of those idle ceremonies now disposed of for ever by the new dispensation of Lepaux and his brethren. With such notions Mary Wolstonecraft cast bold eyes upon the Shakespeare of canvas. And he, instead of repelling, as they deserved, those ridiculous advances forthwith, it seems, imagined himself possessed with the pure spirit of Platonic love—assumed the languid air of a sentimental Corydon—exhibited artificial raptures, and revived in imagination the fading fires of his youth. Yet

Mrs. Fuseli appears to have had little serious cause for jealousy in this mutual attachment.

"Between the celebrated painter and herself" (says the able writer who afterwards married Mary Wolstonecraft), "there existed sentiments of genuine affection and friendship. She saw Mr. Fuseli frequently: he amused, delighted, and instructed her. As a painter, she could not but wish to see his works, and consequently to frequent his house; she visited him; her visits were returned. Notwithstanding the inequality of their years, Mary was not of a temper to live upon terms of so much intimacy with a man of merit and genius without loving him. The delight she enjoyed in his society she transferred by association to his person. She had now lived for upwards of thirty years in a state of celibacy and seclusion, and as her sensibilities were exquisitely acute, she felt this sort of banishment from social charities more painfully than persons in general are likely to feel it. The sentiments which Mr. Fuseli excited in her mind taught her the secret to which she was in a manner a stranger. Let it not, however, be imagined, that this was any other than the dictate of a refined sentiment, and the simple deduction of morality and reason. It happened in the present case that Mr. Fuseli was already married; and in visiting at his house his wife became the acquaintance of Mary. Mary did not disguise from herself how desirable it would have been that the man in whom she discovered qualities calling forth all the strength of her attachment, should have been equally free with herself. But she cheerfully submitted to the empire of circumstances."

The coquetting of a married man of fifty with a tender female philosopher of thirty-one can never be an agreeable subject of contemplation; but it is probable that Fuseli felt no disposition to abandon his wife and his duty, however culpable he may have been in permitting the commencement of this absurd flirtation. Mrs. Fuseli, meanwhile, regarded the philandering of these originals with no easy mind. One day, when she seemed to be in a towering passion, "Sophia, my love," said her sarcastic husband, "why don't you swear?—you don't know how much it would ease your mind."

To ease her own mind, Mary Wolstonecraft went to France in the year 1792. "One of her principal inducements to this step," says her husband and biographer, "related, I believe, to Mr. Fuseli. She had at first considered it as reasonable and judicious to cultivate what I may be permitted to call a Platonic affection for him, but she did not in the sequel find all the satisfaction in this plan which she had originally expected from it. It was in vain that she enjoyed much pleasure in his society and that she enjoyed it frequently. Her ardent imagination was continually conjuring up pictures of the happiness she would have found if fortune had favoured their more intimate union. She felt herself formed for domestic affection, and all those tender charities which men of sensibility have always treated as the dearest bond of human society. General conversation and society could not satisfy her; she felt herself alone, as it were, in the great mass of her species, and she repined when she reflected that the best years of her life were spent in this comfortless solitude. These ideas made the cordial intercourse of Mr. Fuseli, which had at first been one of her greatest pleasures, a source of perpetual torment to her. She conceived it necessary to snap the chain of this association in her mind, and for this purpose determined to seek a new climate and mingle in different scenes." It would have been as well if Philosophy had kept her favourite daughter at home; but I shall lift the veil no further—those who wish to follow out the story of this strange person may consult the pages of the gentleman who could not only admire, but marry her, and when she was no more, employ the pen which wrote "Caleb Williams," in a detailed narrative of her crazy and vicious career.

Fuseli sought refuge from the active affections of Miss Wolstonecraft in the absorbing studies of a new and gigantic undertaking—this was the Milton Gallery of paintings, commenced in 1791, completed in 1800, and containing in all forty-seven pictures from the works of the illustrious poet. This magnificent plan originated with Fuseli, was countenanced by Johnson the bookseller, and supported by the genius of Cowper, who undertook to prepare an edition of Milton with translations of his Latin

and Italian poems. The pictures were to be engraven and introduced as embellishments to the work. Of this task the poet thus writes to his friend Rose: "You, who know how necessary it is for me to be employed, will be glad to hear that I have been called to a new literary engagement, and that I have not refused it. A 'Milton,' that is to rival, and, if possible, exceed in splendour Boydell's 'Shakespeare,' is in contemplation, and I am in the editor's office. Fuseli is the painter. My business will be to select notes from others, and write original notes: to translate the Latin and Italian poems, and give a correct text." Ill-health interfered between the poet and his task—the painter went to work with more than even his accustomed enthusiasm. It would appear, however, that Boydell threw obstacles in the way, though of what kind I cannot guess. They are thus alluded to by Cowper in one of his letters: "As to Milton, the die is cast—I am engaged—have bargained with Johnson and cannot recede. This squabble, in the meantime, between Fuseli and Boydell does not interest me at all; let it terminate as it may, I have only to perform my job and leave the event to be decided by the combatants." If Boydell was displeased because Fuseli had preferred the offers of Johnson, we may then suppose that the "Shakespeare" had been to him a profitable undertaking—men in business seldom dispute concerning works which are not marketable. The upshot was, that Boydell was vanquished or was pacified, and the work, which perhaps had never been seriously interrupted, went on.

To this high task the artist brought many high qualities; but when the doors of the Milton Gallery were opened to the world, it was seen that the genius of Fuseli was of a different order from that of Milton. To the severe, serene majesty of the poet the intractable fancy of the painter had refused to bow; the awful grandeur of the realm of Perdition, and the sublime despair of its untamable Tenant, were too much for him—though he probably thought them too little. He could add fury to Moloch and malignancy to Beelzebub; but he fell below the character of terrible daring, enduring fortitude, and angelic

splendour, which mark the arch-apostate of Milton. The most visible want is in that grave and majestic solemnity with which the poet has invested all that he has touched; and the chief excellences to be set against this prevailing defect, are a certain aërial buoyancy, and a supernatural glow of colour, which in some of these pieces fill the imagination of the observer, and redeem in so far the reputation of Fuseli.

Of the paintings which compose this gallery, the "Lazar House" is most admired by men of vertu: the "Rising of Satan at the touch of Ithuriel's Spear" is the favourite with the multitude. In the first he showed fine taste and poetic tact, by omitting all which could excite disgust, and by giving a mental rather than a bodily image of the poet's meaning. In the latter he shows us our first parents asleep in all the lustre of innocence, and the discovered fiend starting up in his own likeness at the touch of the celestial spear. In the "Lazar House" he has handled a difficult subject with wonderful skill—in the other he has successfully shown the power which he possessed above all men of giving aërial motion to his supernatural creations. In the whole compass of art there is not a lovelier or more terrific scene than this—the naked and reposing loveliness of the new created pair, and the startled and louring looks of the audacious fiend as he rises "like a pyramid of fire," are blended into one strange but perfect harmony.

To image forth the undaunted fiend with horror plumed on his helm was no common task, but to give a true and yet an undisgusting picture of the "Lazar House," seemed more difficult still. Let the reader only conceive how it was possible to personate these lines without offending against the proprieties of pictorial composition:—

> "Immediately a place
> Before his eyes appear'd, sad, noisome, dark;
> A Lazar House it seem'd; wherein were laid
> Numbers of all diseased; all maladies
> Of ghastly spasm, or racking tortures; qualms,
> Of heart-sick agony; all feverous kinds;
> Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs;
> Intestine stone and ulcer; colic pangs;
> Demoniac phrenzy, moping melancholy,

> And moonstruck madness; pining atrophy,
> Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence;
> Dropsies and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.
> Dire was the tossing, deep the groans; Despair
> Tended the sick, busied from couch to couch,
> And over them triumphant Death his dart
> Shook, but delay'd to strike."

Fuseli has omitted Despair—demoniac phrenzy is one of the most pathetic imaginings of the painter. This fine picture, together with the "Bridging of Chaos," is in the gallery of Lord Guildford.

The "Night-Hag" is another noble effort of imagination —it embodies these grand lines:—

> "Nor uglier follow the Night-Hag, when, call'd
> In secret, riding through the air, she comes,
> Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance
> With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon
> Eclipses at their charms."

In this picture Fuseli may almost be said to have equalled his author; yet it remained long on his hands. In 1808, when Mr. Knowles bought it, Fuseli looked earnestly at him, and said, "Young man, the picture you have purchased is one of my very best—yet no one has asked its price till now—it requires a poetic mind to feel and love such a work."

In a pecuniary point of view these pieces were unproductive; but the praise which the attempt and much of the execution obtained gratified the painter, nor was he unwilling to believe that, like the poem which they embellished, they would have but an age of oblivion and many centuries of light.[1] They were all visible, he said, to his

[1] Southey writes to his friend Taylor, of Norwich, concerning this gallery, "I am sorry you did not see the Milton Gallery. Fuseli raised no expectation in me, except of distortion and extravagance. There was something of this, but there was also a sublimity of which I could scarcely have supposed painting capable. He had doubled the pleasure I derive from Milton. The 'Bridging of the Abyss,' and the 'Encounter of Satan and Death' are surprisingly fine. The 'Lazar House' is a tremendous picture." The admiration which these works, though coldly received by the public, called forth from able critics might well

fancy before he painted them. He pondered over the poet till he was fully possessed with the character of the scene; the figures which belonged to it appeared as it were in a vision: but he nevertheless complained of the splendour in which his fancy invested them, and declared that he could not paint up to his imagination. In comparing those splendid fictions with living nature, he was struck, he often said, with the lamentable deficiencies of the latter; yet conscious that by nature he must be tried and judged, he was heard to exclaim in a fit of peevishness, "Damn Nature!—she always puts me out." He had sometimes the curiosity to walk into the Milton Gallery after it was opened to the public, and as it was never very crowded, he could look at his works without much fear of interruption. One day a visitor accosted him, mistaking him for the keeper—"Those paintings, Sir, are from 'Paradise Lost,' I hear, and 'Paradise Lost' was written by Milton—I have never read the poem, but I shall read it now." "I would not advise you, Sir," said the sarcastic artist, "*you* will find it an exceedingly tough job." In the original sketch of the guardian angels forsaking our first parents after the fall, they were represented rising on wings. He looked earnestly at his sketch, and exclaimed —for he generally thought aloud—"They *shall* rise without wings." He tried and succeeded.

Fears of a pecuniary nature pressed not a little on Fuseli while he laboured in the Milton Gallery. From these he was relieved by a steadfast friend—Mr. Coutts—who aided him while in Rome and forsook him not in any of his after difficulties. The grateful painter once waited on the banker and said, "I have finished the best of all my works —the 'Lazar House'—when shall I send it home?" "My friend," said Coutts, "for me to take this picture would

have seemed to justify Fuseli's hopes of future fame, yet at the present day his paintings are almost as forgotten as those of poor Barry, whose neglect by his own generation should, according to the general rule, have brought him appreciation by another.

Fuseli, strange to say, is not represented by one picture in the National collection; nor has he above two or three times, and then only by inferior works, made an appearance at the "Old Masters."—Ed.

be a fraud upon you and upon the world. I have no place in which it could be fitly seen. Sell it to some one who has a gallery—your kind offer of it is sufficient for me, and makes all matters straight between us." For a period of sixty years that worthy man was the unchangeable friend of the painter. The apprehensions which the latter entertained of poverty were frequently without cause, and Coutts on such occasions has been known to assume a serious look and talk of scarcity of cash and of sufficient securities. Away flew Fuseli, muttering oaths and cursing all parsimonious men, and having found a friend, returned with him breathless, saying, "There! I stop your mouth with a security." The cheque for the sum required was given, the security refused, and the painter pulled his hat over his eyes

"To hide the tear that fain would fall"—

and went on his way.

Before he commenced his labours in the Milton Gallery, he obtained the friendship of the poet Cowper. This was brought about by their sympathy of admiration for Homer. He, we have already said, was one of the gods whom Fuseli worshipped, while on our English poets, with the exception of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, he looked with indifference or contempt. But when the author of the "Task" laid his hand on Homer, in 1784, he rose suddenly in the estimation of Fuseli. To offer incense to his chief idol was a proof at once of belief and taste, and the learned artist volunteered to correct some passages where the translator, as he imagined, had erred in the sense, and to lend him light in other parts which the commentators had left obscure. That he was equal to all this there can be little doubt, since Cowper says so. "I am very sensibly obliged,"—he thus writes to his bookseller, in 1790—"by the remarks of Mr. Fuseli, and I beg that you will tell him so: they afford me opportunities of improvement which I shall not neglect. When he shall see the press copy he will be convinced of this, and will be convinced, likewise, that smart as he sometimes is, he spares me often when I have no mercy on myself."

In another letter the poet bestows higher praise on his critic. "My translation" (he says), "fast as it proceeds, passes under the observation of a most accurate discerner of all blemishes. I know not whether I told you before or now tell you for the first time, that I am in the hands of a most extraordinary person. He is intimate with my bookseller and voluntarily offered his service. I was at first doubtful whether to accept it or not; but finding that my friends were not to be satisfied on any other terms, though myself a perfect stranger to the man and his qualifications, except as he was recommended by Johnson, I at length consented, and have since found reason to rejoice that I did. I called him an extraordinary person, and such he is; for he is not only correct in Homer and accurate in his knowledge of the Greek to a degree that entitles him to that appellation, but though a foreigner, is a perfect master of our language, and has exquisite taste in English poetry." Praise from a man so wise and conscientious as Cowper is entitled to every respect.

Examples of his critical sagacity and specimens of his nice perception of the meaning of Homer, might readily be quoted, for Cowper has affixed Fuseli's initials to all the emendations which he adopted. There is a strong poetic sensibility in many of his corrections; and the learned are agreed that sound scholarship pervades them all. "By his assistance," says Cowper, with his customary openness, "I have improved many passages,[1] supplied many oversights, and corrected many mistakes—such as will of course escape the most diligent and attentive labourer in such a work. I ought to add, because it is the best assurance of his zeal and fidelity, that he does not toil for hire, nor will accept of any premium, but has entered upon the business merely for his amusement." In literature as well as in

[1] To give a single example—the second line in the following passage describing Hector and his warriors, in the thirteenth Book of the Iliad, was supplied by Fuseli.

"Spear crowded spear,
Shield, helmet, man, pressed helmet, man, and shield:
The hairy crests of their resplendent casques
Kiss'd close at every nod."

art, Fuseli was a thorough enthusiast—the love of mere *amusement* had no charms for him any more than the desire of gain—he was a slave to his love of fame, and a slave to nothing else. His voluntary labours on Homer extended over a space of five years.

Though Fuseli was accustomed to express sovereign contempt for all that artists know by the name of commissions, he had been prevailed upon by an offer of two hundred and fifty pounds to make drawings for a large edition of Shakespeare. Of this backsliding he never failed to speak with sorrow and scorn; he conceived commissions to be injurious to art, and to take away much of the inspiration which must or should be felt in the creation of works of true genius. His illustrations of Shakespeare, however, are not less clever than strange. They are full of poetical feeling and more than poetical wildness. The observance of nature and the barbarism of dress were constantly in his way, and in his attempts to escape from the fetters of costume he cuts very curious capers. "Orlando in the Forest" is a striking example—he is demanding food for his famishing companion, his posture is ludicrously extravagant, and his dress fits so close, that were it not for the projecting selvages of his pantaloons, he would not appear to live in a land of civilization and tailors.

Nor was Fuseli much more sedate in the action of his designs, when a graver work demanded his pencil—he furnished sketches for the Bible, published in sixpenny numbers, and joined Richard Westall in illustrating a splendid edition of the New Testament. This too was a commission; whatever resembled trade hurt the sensitive nature of Fuseli: for the excellence of the work take his own words. "*We* made pictures for the New Testament—there was only one good one among them all, and I suspect I painted it; but Richard may have the merit if he likes, for it was not much." The *ci-devant* friend of Miss Wolstonecraft was no scoffer at revelation, nor would he suffer any one in his presence to call it in question; he was, in fact, too full of feeling not to reverence his Bible, and he was at all times difficult to please with modern

attempts to embody Shakespeare. When Northcote exhibited his "Judgment of Solomon," Fuseli looked at it with a sarcastic smirk on his face. "How do you like my picture?" inquired Northcote. "Much," was the answer —"the action suits the word—Solomon holds out his fingers like a pair of open scissors at the child, and says 'Cut it'—I like it much!" Northcote remembered this when Fuseli exhibited a picture representing Hercules drawing his arrow at Pluto. "How do you like my picture?" inquired Fuseli. "Much!" said Northcote—"it is clever, very clever, but he'll never hit him." "He shall hit him," exclaimed the other, "and that speedily." Away ran Fuseli with his brush, and as he laboured to give the arrow the true direction, was heard to mutter, "Hit him! —by Jupiter, but he shall hit him!"

His reverence for Homer and regard for Cowper induced him, on the appearance of the "Iliad" in 1793, to write a criticism upon it in the "Analytical Review," a work which was favoured with many contributions from his pen—on natural history, classical learning, and the fine arts. It was not easy indeed to translate up to Fuseli's notion of Homer; and Cowper comprehended him fully when he read his critique. "I am happy," said that modest and devout poet, "to have fallen into the hands of a critic rigorous enough indeed, but a scholar and a man of sense, and who does not deliberately intend me mischief. I am better pleased indeed that he censures some things, than I should have been to be treated with unmixed commendation; for his censure, to use the new diplomatic term, will accredit his praise. In his particular remarks he is for the most part right, and I shall be the better for them, but in his general ones I think he asserts too largely and more than he could prove. The critic, by the way, is Fuseli—I know him by infallible indications." It was not easy to mistake the hand of one who took such singular liberties occasionally with the English language. The observations in this criticism were sometimes profound, often sagacious, and occasionally sarcastic.

It pleased Fuseli to be thought one of those erudite gentlemen whom the poet describes—

"Far seen in Greek—deep men of letters;"

and he loved to annoy certain of his companions with the display of his antique lore. He sometimes composed Greek verses in the emergency of the moment, and affected to forget the name of the author. He once repeated half-a-dozen sonorous and well-sounding lines to Porson, and said, "With all your learning now you cannot tell me who wrote that." The Professor, "much renowned for Greek," confessed his ignorance, and said, "I don't know him." "How the devil could you know him?" chuckled Fuseli; "I made them this moment." When thwarted in the Academy, and that was not seldom, his wrath aired itself in a polyglot. "It is a pleasant thing and an advantageous," said the painter, on one of those occasions, "to be learned. I can speak Greek, Latin, French, English, German, Danish, Dutch, and Spanish, and so let my folly or my fury get vent through eight different avenues."

Many sarcastic remarks were uttered and more written on the wild insobriety of his productions, and as he was not spared himself, neither did he spare others. His vanity was galled, not wounded, by the random strictures of criticism; and his reign at the table of Johnson, the bookseller, where he appeared weekly, was sometimes rendered uneasy by the satire of Wolcot, to whom the oddities of the artist presented a broad mark. But it was impossible to dethrone him. He had reigned there forty years, adorning the society by his learning and enlivening it with his wit, and in both he was a match for any of the distinguished men, and those were not few, whom it was his fortune to encounter.

When Barry lost the professorship of painting, in the year 1799, it was bestowed with acclamation on Fuseli, and as his mind was overflowing with knowledge of all kinds, he found little difficulty and much pleasure in fulfilling the duties of his new station. During his professorship he delivered nine lectures, of which the following six only are printed—on ancient art, modern art, invention, composition, expression, and chiaroscuro. The first three are the best. In them he has poured out learning, obser-

vation, and feeling with a lavish hand, and there is an original power in his diction, such as no man has exhibited before or since in a language not his own. The first three lectures were delivered in 1801, and the crowds who went to hear them were great, and their cheers vehement. His disquisition upon Invention has been deservedly admired. It is difficult to select a single passage which will give a sufficient notion of the author's original grasp of mind.

"Form, in its widest meaning, the visible universe that envelopes our senses, and its counterpart, the invisible one, that agitates our mind with visions bred on sense by fancy, are the element and realm of invention: it discovers, selects, combines the possible, the probable, the known, in a mode that strikes with an air of truth and novelty. Possible, strictly, means an effect derived from a cause, a body composed of materials, a coalition of forms whose union or co-agency imply in themselves no absurdity, no contradiction: applied to our art, it takes a wider latitude; it means the representation of effects derived from causes, or forms compounded from materials heterogeneous and incompatible among themselves, but rendered so plausible to our senses, that the transition of one part to another seems to be accounted for by an air of organization, and the eye glides imperceptibly, or with satisfaction, from one to the other, or over the whole: that this was the condition on which, and the limits within which, the ancients permitted invention to represent what was, strictly speaking, impossible, we may with plausibility surmise from the picture of Zeuxis, described by Lucian in the memoir to which he has prefixed that painter's name, who was probably one of the first adventurers in this species of imagery. Zeuxis had painted a family of Centaurs: the dam, a beautiful female to the middle, with the lower parts gradually sliding into the most exquisite forms of a young Thessalian mare, half reclined in playful repose, and gently pawing the velvet ground, offered her human nipple to one infant centaur, whilst another greedily sucked the feline udder below, but both with their eyes turned up to a lion whelp held over them by the male centaur, their father, rising above the hillock on which the female re-

clined, a grim feature, but whose ferocity was somewhat tempered by a smile.

"This picture the artist exhibited, expecting that justice from the penetration of the public which the genius deserved that taught him to give plausibility to a compound of heterogeneous forms, to inspire them with suitable soul, and to imitate the laws of existence, he was mistaken. The novelty of the conceit eclipsed the art that had embodied it; the artist was absorbed in his subject, and the unbounded praise bestowed was that of idle restless curiosity gratified. Sick of gods and goddesses, of demigods and pure human combinations, the Athenians panted only for what was new. The artist, as haughty as irritable, ordered his picture to be withdrawn. 'Cover it, Micchio,' said he to his attendant, 'cover it, and carry it home, for this mob stick only to the clay of our art.' Such were the limits set to invention by the ancients: secure within these it defied the ridicule thrown on that grotesque conglutination which Horace exposes: guarded by these, their mythology scattered its metamorphoses, made every element its tributary, and transmitted the privilege to us on equal conditions. Their Scylla and our Portress of Hell—their dæmons and our spectres—the shade of Patroclus and the ghost of Hamlet—their naïads, nymphs, and oreads, and our sylphs, gnomes, and fairies—their furies and our witches—differ less in essence than in local temporary social modifications: their common origin was fancy operating upon the materials of nature, assisted by legendary tradition and the curiosity implanted in us of diving into the invisible; and they are suffered or invited to mix with or superintend real agency, in proportion to the analogy which we discover between them and ourselves. Pindar praises Homer less for that 'winged power' which whirls incident on incident with such rapidity, that, absorbed by the whole, and drawn from the impossibility of single parts, we swallow a tale too gross to be believed in a dream, than for the greater power by which he contrived to connect his imaginary creation with the realities of nature and human passions: without this, the fiction of the poet and the painter will leave us rather stupefied by

its insolence than impressed by its power: it will be considered only as a superior kind of legerdemain—an exertion of ingenuity to no adequate end."

The chief aim of the new Professor was to impress on his audience a sense of the nobleness of art, and the high purposes to which alone it ought to be dedicated. With his own pencil he endeavoured to obey his own maxims, and the subjects which he painted were all in their nature poetical. Neither the advice of friends, the taunts of enemies, nor the offers of the wealthy, could induce him to descend farther down the scale of art. Like some of the old preachers, who, in their fierce sermons, ordered the profane and those who were not chosen to rise and depart, he dismissed from his lecture-room all students with sordid minds, who looked upon art as the way to gain, and who had none of the fervour of natural genius. On those who made mere fac-similes of human life, or who painted new-mown meadows, or well-fed oxen, he had little mercy. He asserted in conversation, if not in lectures, that the Royal Academy robbed the plough and the shoemaker's stall of very meritorious persons, and that many came to the sculptor's chisel and the painter's pencil, who might have handled the joiner's plane or the tailor's scissors with greater advantage to the public and profit to themselves.

To support his theory of Invention, he was ready with illustration from ancient lore and the stores of an inexhaustible imagination. On one occasion he introduced the following happy quotation from Quintilian: "We give," says that eminent Roman, "the name of visions to what the Greeks call phantasies: that power by which the images of ancient things are represented by the mind with the energy of objects moving before our eyes: he who conceives these rightly will be a master of passions: his is that well-tempered fancy which can imagine things, voices, acts, as they really exist—a power, perhaps, in a great measure, dependent on our will. For if those images so pursue us when our minds are in a state of rest, or fondly fed by hope, or in a kind of waking dream; that are seen to travel, to sail, to fight, to harangue in public, or dis-

pose of riches we possess not, and all this with an air of reality, why should we not turn to account this view of the mind? Suppose I am to plead the case of a murdered man, why should not every supposable circumstance of the act float before my eyes? Shall I not see the murderer, unawares, rush in upon him—in vain he tries to escape—see how pale he turns—hear you not his shrieks—his entreaties?—do you not see him flying, struck, falling? Will not his blood, his ashy semblance, his groans, his last expiring gasp, seize on every mind?"

"By this radiant recollection of associated ideas," continues Fuseli, "the spontaneous ebullitions of nature, selected by observation, treasured by memory, classed by sensibility and judgment, Shakespeare became the supreme master of passions and the ruler of our hearts: this embodied his Falstaff and his Shylock, Hamlet and Lear, Juliet and Rosalind. By this power he saw Warwick uncover the corpse of Gloucester and swear to his assassination and his tugs for life: by this he made Banquo see the Weird Sisters bubble up from earth, and in their own air vanish: this is the hand that struck upon the bell when Macbeth's drink was ready, and from her chamber pushed his dreaming wife once more to methodize the murder of her guest:—and this was the power of Theon; such was the unpremeditated conception which inspired him with the idea of that warrior, who, in the words of Ælian, seemed to embody the terrible graces and the enthusiastic furor of the God of War. Impetuous he rushed onward to oppose the sudden incursion of enemies—with shield thrown forward and high brandished falchion, his step, as he swept on, seemed to devour the ground; his eye flashed defiance—you fancied to hear his voice—his looks denounce perdition and slaughter without mercy. His figure, single, and without other accompaniments of war than what the havoc of the distance showed, Theon deemed sufficient to answer the impression he intended to make on those whom he had selected to inspect it. He kept it covered till a trumpet, after a prelude of martial symphonies, at once by his command blew with an invigorated fierceness a signal of attack—the curtain dropped—the

terrific figure appeared to start from the canvas, and irresistibly assailed the astonished eyes of the assembly."

Not the least valuable parts of Fuseli's lectures are those in which he, for the illustration of his own opinions, describes and compares particular works of the great masters. The Lecture on *Expression* (published in 1820) is especially rich in passages of this kind, nor perhaps has Vasari himself surpassed, even in his famous description of Giorgione's St. Mark, the effect produced by the style of Fuseli in treating of the Samson of Rembrandt, as contrasted with that of Julio Romano. The reader will not quarrel with the length of the following quotation.

"The gradations of expression within, close to, and beyond its limits, cannot perhaps be elucidated with greater perspicuity than by comparison; and the different moments which Julio Romano, Vandyke, and Rembrandt, have selected to represent the subject of Samson betrayed by Delilah, offers one of the fairest specimens furnished by art. Considering it as a drama, we may say that Julio forms the plot, Vandyke unravels it, and Rembrandt shows the extreme of the catastrophe.

"In the composition of Julio, Samson, plunged into sleep, and stretched on the ground, rests his head and presses with his arm the thigh of Delilah on one side, whilst on the other a nimble minion, busily but with timorous caution, fingers and clips his locks: such is his fear, that to be firm, he rests one knee on a footstool tremblingly watching the sleeper, and ready to escape at his least motion. Delilah, seated between both, fixed by the weight of Samson, warily turns her head towards a troop of warriors in the background; with the left arm stretched out she beckons their leader, with the finger of the right hand she presses her lip to enjoin silence and noiseless approach. The Herculean make and lion port of Samson, his perturbed though ponderous sleep, the quivering agility of the curled favourite employed, the harlot graces and meretricious elegance contrasted by equal firmness and sense of danger in Delilah, the attitude and look of the grim veteran who heads the ambush, whilst they give us

the clue to all that followed, keep us in anxious suspense —we palpitate in breathless expectation; this is the plot.

"The terrors which Julio made us forebode, Vandyke summons to our eyes. The mysterious lock is cut; the dreaded victim is roused from the lap of the harlot-priestess. Starting unconscious of his departed power, he attempts to spring forward, and with one effort of his mighty breast and expanded arms to dash his foes to the ground and fling the alarmed traitress from him—in vain, shorn of his strength, he is borne down by the weight of the mailed chief that throws himself upon him, and over-powered by a throng of infuriate satellites. But though overpowered, less aghast than indignant, his eye flashes reproach on the perfidious female whose wheedling caresses drew the fatal secret from his breast; the plot is unfolded, and what succeeds, too horrible for the sense, is left to fancy to brood upon, or drop it.

"This moment of horror the gigantic but barbarous genius of Rembrandt chose, and, without a metaphor, *executed* a subject, which humanity, judgment, and taste, taught his rivals only to *treat;* he displays a scene which no eye but that of Domitian or Nero could wish or bear to see. Samson, stretched on the ground, is held by one Philistine under him, whilst another chains his right arm, and a third, clenching his beard with one, drives a dagger into his eye with the other hand. The pain that blasts him, darts expression—from the contortions of the mouth and his gnashing teeth, to the crampy convulsions of the leg dashed high into the air. Some fiend-like features glare through the gloomy light which discovers Delilah, her work now done, sliding off, the shears in her left, the locks of Samson in her right hand. If her figure, elegant, attractive, such as Rembrandt never conceived before or after, deserve our wonder rather than our praise: no words can do justice to the expression that animates her face, and shows her less shrinking from the horrid scene, than exulting in being its cause. Such is the work, whose magic of colour, tone, and chiaroscuro, irresistibly entrap the eye, whilst we detest the brutal choice of the moment.

"Let us, in conclusion, contrast the stern pathos of this

scenery with the placid emotions of a milder subject, in the celebrated pictures which represent the Communion or Death of St. Jerome, by Agostino Caracci, and his scholar, Domenichino, that an altar-piece in the Certosa, near Bologna, this in the church of St. Girolamo della Carità at Rome; but for some time both exhibited in the gallery of the Louvre at Paris. What I have to say on the invention, expression, characters, tone and colour of either, is the result of observations lately made on both in that gallery, where then they were placed nearly opposite to each other.

"In each picture, St. Jerome brought from his cell to receive the sacrament, is represented on his knees, supported by devout attendants; in each the officiating priest is in the act of administering to the dying saint; the same clerical society fills the portico of the temple in both; in both the scene is witnessed from above by infant angels.

"The general opinion is in favour of the pupil, but if in the economy of the whole Domenichino surpasses his master, he appears to me greatly inferior both in the character and expression of the hero. Domenichino has represented Piety scarcely struggling with decay, Agostino triumphant over it; his saint becomes in the place where he is a superior being, and is inspired by the approaching god: that of Domenichino seems divided between resignation, mental and bodily imbecility, and desire. The saint of Agostino is a lion, that of Domenichino a lamb.

"In the sacerdotal figure administering the viaticum, Domenichino has less improved than corrected the unworthy choice of his master. The priest of Agostino is one of the Frati Godenti of Dante, before they received the infernal hood; a gross, fat, self-conceited terrestrial feature, a countenance equally proof to elevation, pity, or thought. The priest of Domenichino is a minister of grace, stamped with the sacred humility that characterized his master, and penetrated by the function of which he is the instrument.

"We are more impressed with the graces of youth than the energies of manhood verging on age: in this respect, as well as that of contrast with the decrepitude of St. Jerom,

the placid contemplative beauty of the young deacon on the foreground of Domenichino, will probably please more, than the poetic trance of the assistant friar with the lighted taper in the foreground of Agostino. This must, however, be observed, that as Domenichino thought proper to introduce supernatural witnesses of the ceremony in imitation of his master, their effect seems less ornamental and more interwoven with the plan, by being perceived by the actors themselves.

"If the attendant characters in the picture of Agostino are more numerous, and have on the whole furnished the hints of admission to those of Domenichino, this, with one exception, may be said to have used more propriety and judgment in the choice. Both have introduced a man with a turban, and opened a portico to characterize an Asiatic scene.

"With regard to composition, Domenichino undoubtedly gains the palm. The disposition on the whole he owes to his master, though he reversed it; but he has cleared it of that oppressive bustle, which rather involves and crowds the principal actors in Agostino, than attends them. He spreads tranquillity with space, and repose without vacuity.

"With this corresponds the tone of the whole. The evening freshness of an oriental day tinges every part; the medium of Agostino partakes too much of the fumigated inside of a Catholic chapel.

"The draperies of both are characteristic and unite subordination with dignity, but their colour is chosen with more judgment by Domenichino, the imbrowned gold and ample folds of the robe of the administering priest are more genial than the cold blue, white, and yellow on the priest of his master; in both, perhaps, the white draperies on the foreground figures have too little strength for the central colours, but it is more perceived in Caracci than in Domenichino.

"The forms of the saint in Caracci are grander and more ideal than in the saint of Domenichino—some have even thought them too vigorous; both, in my opinion, are in harmony with the emotion of the face and expression of either. The eagerness that animates the countenance of

the one may be supposed to spread a momentary vigour over his frame. The mental dereliction of countenance in the other with equal propriety relaxes, and palsies, the limbs which depend on it.

"The colour of Caracci's saint is much more characteristic of fleshy though nearly bloodless substance, than that chosen by his rival, which is withered, shrivelled, leathery in the lights, and earthy in the shade; but the head of the officiating priest in Domenichino, whether considered as a specimen of colour independent of the rest, or as set off by it, for truth, tone, freshness, energy, is not only the best Domenichino ever painted, but perhaps the best that can be conceived."

Fuseli loved to say strong and daring things—to take poetic freedom with language, and to scatter snatches of character over his compositions, such as he hoped would sink into the reader's mind by their satiric weight, or adhere to the memory because of their vividness and force. His character of Salvator Rosa is struck briefly and glowingly off; perhaps he rates his merit too low—what "Savage Rosa dashed" is as savagely treated. These are his words: "The wildness of Salvator Rosa opposes a powerful contrast to the classic regularity of Poussin. Terrific and grand in his conceptions of inanimate nature, he was reduced to attempts at hiding by boldness of hand his inability of exhibiting her impassioned, or in the dignity of character: his line is vulgar; his magic visions, less founded on the principles of terror than on mythologic trash and caprice, are to the probable combinations of nature what the paroxysms of a fever are to the flights of a vigorous fancy. Though so much extolled, and so ambitiously imitated, his banditti are a medley made up of starveling models, shreds and bits of armour from his lumber-room brushed into notice by a daring pencil. Salvator was a satirist and a critic, but the rod which he had the insolence to lift against the nudities of Michael Angelo, and the anachronism of Raphael, would have been better employed in chastising his own misconceptions." [1]

[1] This criticism of Salvator Rosa seems curiously applicable to Fuseli's own work, in which a certain dashing ferocity of style scarcely hides the

This is sufficiently severe; but the presumption of Salvator in lifting his hand against Michael, the throned god of Fuseli's idolatry, was not to be passed without some show of resentment. Rembrandt had not sinned in that sort; his character is drawn with equal vigour and with more of justice. "Rembrandt was in my opinion a genius of the first class in whatever relates not to form. In spite of the most portentous deformity, and without considering the spell of his chiaroscuro, such were his powers of nature—such the grandeur, pathos, or simplicity of his composition, from the most elevated or extensive arrangement to the meanest and most homely—that the best cultivated eye, the purest sensibility, and the most refined taste dwell on them, equally enthralled. Shakespeare alone excepted, no one combined with so much transcendent excellence, so many, in all other men, unpardonable faults, and reconciled us to them. He possessed the full empire of light and shade, and of all the tints that float between them: he tinged his pencil with equal success in the cool of dawn, in the noon-day ray, in the livid flash, in evanescent twilight, and rendered darkness visible. Though made to bend a steadfast eye on the bolder phenomena of nature, yet he knew how to follow her into her calmest abodes, give interest to insipidity or baldness, and pluck a flower in every desert. None ever like Rembrandt knew how to

inherent weakness of the artist's powers. Of Fuseli it assuredly may be said that his "magic visions, less founded on the principles of terror than on mythologic trash and caprice," resemble the fevered dreams of an opium-eater rather than the noble imaginings of a poet. Too often his art descends into the region of the melodramatic; indeed such are the violent contortions and grimaces of his figures, with arms and legs flying in all directions, that it sometimes leaves the impression of mere burlesque. Yet, though theatrical and overstrained, Fuseli was never commonplace, and occasionally, especially in his Milton subjects, he rises to a height of grandeur quite in keeping with the theme of our great epic poet. He would probably have been a better artist had he not lain on his back day after day and week after week, studying Michelangelo. This has been the ruin of many a promising young artist, few having the strength to profit by the teaching of the great master and yet to preserve their own individuality and freedom. Fuseli no doubt aimed at walking in the *terribile via* of Michelangelo; but his limbs were not strong enough to support him along that daring road, and his head, like those of so many other painters, grew dizzy amidst its precipices.—Ed.

improve an accident into a beauty, or give importance to a trifle. If ever he had a master he had no followers. Holland was not made to comprehend his power. The succeeding school of colourists were content to tip the cottage, the hamlet, the boor, the ale-pot, the shambles, and the haze of winter, with orient hues or the glow of setting summer suns."

Having bestowed so much admiration on the princes of the calling, he had little left for other and inferior spirits. Of the "Massacre of the Innocents" by Tintoretto, he says, with singular vigour, "The stormy brush of Tintoretto swept individual woe away in general masses. Two immense wings of light and shade divide the composition and hide the want of sentiment in tumult." He dismisses the names of our British artists in general words and with hasty abruptness. He was disposed to allow the claim of genius in a very moderate degree to few of his more immediate brethren—a high opinion of his own powers was impressed on all he said—he laboured hard with tongue, pen, and pencil, to make that superiority be felt, nor was he unwilling at any time to lower the reputation of his compeers by sarcastic sallies, ironical praises, and ludicrous comparisons. He once called out, as the pictures were coming into the Academy for exhibition, "What pictures are come?" "Many—very many, sir," said the servant. "I know that, but whose are they?"—"There are six landscapes, sir, by Mr.——." "Oh, don't name him, I know whom you mean. Bring me my great coat and umbrella, and I'll go and see them." This was his way of pronouncing them cold and wintry-looking works.

During the brief peace of 1802 Fuseli visited Paris, and saw, in common with thousands of his adopted countrymen, the well-filled galleries of Napoleon. He remained there so long that he collected materials for a dissertation on the subject, and on his return to London proceeded to arrange them. But the renewal of the war, or the apathy of his booksellers, discouraged him so effectually that he discontinued these labours, and employed his talents on a new edition of Pilkington's "Dictionary of Painters." This work, which appeared in 1805, added little to the reputation of

Fuseli. He introduced indeed about two hundred new artists as candidates for fame; but most of them were obscure, and their names were strange to the world. It was a sufficient claim, he seems to have thought, to this distinction that a painter had *tried* the historic style. On the other hand, he affected not to know the Christian name of Gainsborough, though all the world knew it was Thomas; he was grossly unjust also to that elegant artist's merits; nay, such was his haughty bigotry that he classed the works of Hogarth among the daily vulgarities of common minds. His admiration of the eminent painters of historic or poetic compositions was strained and exaggerated, and his contempt for those who sought to win fame by humbler works was still more out of harmony with the ordinary views and feelings of his readers.

Having conceived an affection for the poetry of Gray—which, however, was confined chiefly to the translations—he painted "The Bard," "The Descent of Odin," and "The Fatal Sisters." He was fond indeed of the wild mythology of the Scandinavians, and the numerous traces of the impression which it had made on his mind might be pointed out in his paintings and in his sketches. His "Thor battering the Serpent" was such a favourite that he presented it to the Royal Academy as his admission gift. With quiet beauty and serene grace he knew not well how to begin; the hurrying measures, the crowding epithets, and startling imagery of the northern poetry suited the intoxicated fancy of Fuseli. Such was his love of terrific subjects, that he was known among his brethren by the name of *Painter in ordinary to the Devil*, and he smiled when some one officiously told him of this, and said, "Aye! he has sat to me many times." Once, at Johnson the bookseller's table, one of the guests said, "Mr. Fuseli, I have purchased a picture of yours."—"Have you, Sir; what is the subject?" "Subject? really I don't know." "That's odd; you must be a strange fellow to buy a picture without knowing the subject." "I bought it, Sir, that's enough—I don't know what the *devil* it is."—"Perhaps it is the devil," replied Fuseli, "I have often painted him." On this one of the company, to arrest a conversation which was

growing warm, said, "Fuseli, there is a member of your Academy who has strange looks—and he chooses as strange subjects as you do." "Sir," exclaimed the Professor, "he paints nothing but thieves and murderers, and when he wants a model he looks in the glass."

Fuseli was sudden in his resentments and sometimes severe in his revenge. He had sketched a picture of "Miranda and Prospero" from the "Tempest," and was considering of what dimensions he should make the finished painting, when he was told that Lawrence had sent in for exhibition a picture on the same subject and with the same figures. His wrath knew no bounds. "This comes," he cried, "of my blasted simplicity in showing my sketches—never mind—I'll teach the face-painter to meddle with my 'Prospero and Miranda.'" He had no canvas prepared—he took a finished picture, and over the old performance dashed in hastily, in one laborious day, a wondrous scene from the "Tempest"—hung it in the exhibition right opposite that of Lawrence, and called it "a sketch for a large picture." Sir Thomas said little, but thought much—he never afterwards, I have heard, exhibited a poetic subject.

On the death of Wilton the sculptor, Fuseli became Keeper of the Royal Academy, and removed from Berners Street, where he had lived some two years, to his rooms in Somerset House. This situation—due alike to his great merits and to his declining years—was not supposed to be unwelcome in a pecuniary point of view; it provided a pleasant residence and a respectable salary, and placed for ever above want one who, by his learning and the poetic character of his works, had done much honour to the Academy. A bye-law obliged him to resign the Professorship, which he regained on the death of Opie, and thenceforth filled both situations with honour to himself and to the institution. The enthusiasm of his nature, his foreign pronunciation, the massy vigour of his language, and the sharp acidity of his wit, were not wasted on empty walls,—the lecture-room was commonly full.

He was also on the whole liked as Keeper.[1] It is true

[1] Leslie bears the same testimony as to his general popularity with the students. "He generally came into the room," he says, "once or

that he was often satiric and severe on the students—that he defaced their drawings by corrections which, compared to their weak and trembling lines, seemed traced by a tar-mop, and that he called them tailors and bakers, and vowed that there was more genius in the *claw* of one of Michael Angelo's eagles than in all the *heads* with which the Academy was swarming. The youths on whom this tempest of invective fell, smiled—and the Keeper, pleased by submission, walked up to each easel—whispered a word of advice confidentially, and retired in peace to enjoy the company of his Homer, Michael Angelo, Dante, and Milton.

He was an unwilling listener to the praise of any painter out of the true historic school. He mentioned Reynolds in his lectures as a great portrait painter and no more; and one evening in company, when Sir Thomas Lawrence was discoursing on what he called the historic grandeur of Sir Joshua, and contrasting him with Titian and Raphael, Fuseli kindled up: "Blastation! you will drive me mad—Reynolds and Raphael!—a dwarf and a giant!—why will you waste all your fine words!" He rose and left the room, muttering something about a tempest in a pint pot. Lawrence followed,—soothed him, and brought him back. These two eminent men loved one another. The Keeper had no wish to give permanent offence, and the President had as little desire to be on ill terms with one so bitter and so satirical. They were often together; and I have heard Sir Thomas say, that he never had a dispute with Fuseli save once—and that was concerning their pictures of Satan. Indeed, the Keeper, both with tongue and pen, took pleasure in pointing out the excellences of his friend, nor

twice every evening, and rarely without a book in his hand. He would take any vacant place among the students, and sit reading nearly the whole time he stayed with us. I believe he was right. For those students who are born with powers that will make them eminent it is sufficient to place fine works of art before them." His power of discerning such pupils was also remarkable. Wilkie was early selected by him for notice. Haydon also, as he himself shows, received considerable attention, and Sir Edwin Landseer, then a pretty curly-headed boy, was an especial favourite with the sharp-tongued, but kind-hearted keeper. When he missed him from his place he would look round, Leslie relates, and ask, "Where is my little dog-boy?"—ED.

was he blind to his defects. "This young man," thus he wrote in one of his early criticisms, "would do well to look at nature again; his flesh is too glassy." Lawrence showed his sense of his monitor's accuracy by following the advice. When Lawrence had risen into reputation and had money at command, he said, laying his hand upon one of Fuseli's sketches, "Make me a painting of this fine subject, and I will give you the price of one of my best paintings." "The fit is off me for this subject," said Fuseli, "I wish you would choose some other." He was unwilling to paint to the suggestion of others, and he perhaps disliked the idea of having his poetic painting paid by the price of a portrait.

The students found a constant source of amusement in his oddities, his jests, and the strong biting wit which he had ever at their service. They were fond of repeating his jokes. He heard a violent altercation in the studio one day, and inquired the cause. "It is only those fellows, the students, Sir," said one of the porters. "Fellows!" exclaimed Fuseli; "I would have you to know, Sir, that those *fellows* may one day become academicians." The noise increased—he opened the door and burst in upon them, exclaiming, "You are a den of damned wild beasts." One of the offenders, Munro by name, bowed and said, "and Fuseli is our Keeper." He retired smiling, and muttering "the fellows are growing witty." Another time he saw a figure from which the students were making drawings lying broken to pieces. "Now who the devil has done this?"—"Mr. Medland," said an officious probationer, "he jumped over the rail and broke it." He walked up to the offender—all listened for the storm. He calmly said, "Mr. Medland, you are fond of jumping—go to Sadler's Wells—it is the best academy in the world for improving agility." A student as he passed held up his drawing, and said confidently, "Here, Sir—I finished it without using a crumb of bread." "All the worse for your drawing," replied Fuseli, "buy a twopenny loaf and rub it out." "What do you see, Sir?" he said one day to a student, who, with his pencil in his hand and his drawing before him, was gazing into vacancy. "Nothing, Sir!" was the answer.

"Nothing, young man," said the Keeper emphatically, "then I tell you that you ought to *see something*—you ought to see distinctly the true image of what you are trying to draw. I see the vision of all I paint—and I wish to heaven I could paint up to what I see."

With wit at command, and willingness to let it be felt, he had nevertheless many friends, and among them we must number the students of the Royal Academy. Those of the year 1807 presented him with a silver vase, designed by one whom he loved—Flaxman the sculptor: he received it very graciously. Ten years afterwards he was presented with the diploma of the first class in the Roman Academy of St. Luke.

He reserved a little of his wit and satire for his elder brethren of the easel and the modelling stool. He had aided Northcote and Opie in obtaining admission into the Academy, and when he desired some station for himself, he naturally expected their assistance—they voted against him, and next morning went together to his house to offer an explanation. He saw them coming—he opened the door as they were scraping their shoes, and said, "Come in—come in—for the love of heaven come in, else you will ruin me entirely."—"How so?" cried Opie. "Marry, thus," replied the other, "my neighbours over the way will see you and say, 'Fuseli's *done*—for there's a bum-bailiff,' he looked at Opie, 'going to seize his person; and a little Jew broker,' he looked at Northcote, 'going to take his furniture'—so come in, I tell you—come in!" On Northcote especially he loved to exercise some of the malevolence of rival wit. He looked on his friend's painting of the angel meeting Balaam and his ass. "How do you like it?" said the painter. "Vastly, Northcote," said Fuseli, "you are an angel at an ass—but an ass at an angel." A person who desired to speak to the Keeper of the Academy, followed so close on the porter, whose business it was to introduce him, that he announced himself with an expression which the inimitable Liston has since rendered proverbial, "I hope I don't intrude."—"You do intrude," said Fuseli, in a surly tone. "Do I?" said the visitor; "then, Sir, I will come to-morrow, if you please." "No,

Sir," replied he, "don't come to-morrow, for then you will intrude a second time: tell me your business now."

Fuseli spared no one: on Nollekens he was often very merciless; he disliked him for his close and parsimonious nature, and rarely failed to hit him under the fifth rib. Once at the table of Mr. Coutts the banker, Mrs. Coutts, dressed like Morgiana, came dancing in, presenting her dagger at every breast: as she confronted the sculptor, Fuseli called out, "Strike—strike—there's no fear; Nolly was never known to bleed." When Blake, a man infinitely more wild in conception than Fuseli himself, showed him one of his strange productions, he said, "Now some one has told you this is very fine."—"Yes," said Blake, "the Virgin Mary appeared to me, and told me it was very fine: what can you say to that?"—"Say?" exclaimed Fuseli, "why nothing—only her ladyship has not an immaculate taste."

From 1817 to 1825, Fuseli exhibited at the Academy a dozen of pictures, and neither the fervour of his fancy nor his skill of hand had failed him in the least. Of his twelve last pictures, six were received with much approbation—"Perseus starting from the Cave of the Gorgons"—"The Lady and the Infernal Knight in Theodore and Honorio"—"Dante descending into Hell discovers in a whirlwind the forms of Paolo and Francesca"—an "Incantation from Theocritus"—"Theseus, Ariadne, and the Minotaur"—and "Comus from Milton." These works attest his love of poetic art, and his resolution to die as he had lived—in the service of the loftier Muses.

Fuseli was wise in calling in the graver to the aid of his fame. His exquisite outline was preserved, his wild colouring, which startled thousands, concealed, and the ruling sentiment exhibited in all its perfection. This was performed for him by the hand of Moses Haughton—an artist skilful alike with graver and pencil, and as the engravings were all made under the eye of Fuseli himself, they are much in request with collectors, and rarer than I could wish them to be. Of these the "Lazar House"—"Satan aroused from the ear of Eve"—"Hamlet's Ghost"—"The Midsummer Night's Dream"—and that fine one the

"Goddess fair and free,
In heaven ycleped Euphrosyne,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth"—

are the best specimens, and those who have the good fortune to possess them are enabled to see Fuseli in some of his highest moods.

He had the art of acquiring friends and the rarer art of retaining them. To the names of Cadell and Boydell and Armstrong, his first and intimate companions, he added many more as he increased in years; and in naming those who purchased his works, we name the chief patrons of the poetic style of painting. Roscoe, the elegant author of the life of Leo the Tenth, bought eleven—Wood Mason purchased four—Sir Robert Smythe became proprietor of several—six went to the gallery of Mr. Locke of Newbury Park—two were purchased by Sir Brooke Boothby—as many by the late Lord de Tabley—Graham Moore and Carrick Moore, brothers of Sir John Moore, commissioned several. Mr. Knowles increased his collection to a dozen, and the Earl of Guildford, a kind and constant friend, became proprietor of forty. He exhibited in all some seventy pictures—but he painted several hundreds, and those are scattered through many collections. One of great merit—"Paulo and Francesco"—is honourably placed in the gallery of Sir Thomas Lawrence; and another singularly wild and beautiful piece is in the keeping of one who feels its worth, Mr. Wainewright.

The wit of Fuseli was ever ready, and flowed freely out for the pleasure or the annoyance of all who visited him, whether friends or strangers. So much did it abound that the man who was in his company but once was sure to hear something worthy of being remembered for the rest of his life.[1] I have already given specimens not a few—

[1] Wilkie, in his diary, mentions having dined with him at Angerstein's. "Fuseli's conversation," he says, "was particularly striking, and sitting beside him, I had my full share of it. He talked with great discrimination of the different English versions of the great classic poets, and of the harmonious construction of our national poetry, in which he gave the preference to Shakespeare. . . In the course of the evening he, in the hearing of Angerstein and Lawrence, recommended me strongly

one who studied under him in the Academy has enabled me to relate a few more—I shall set them down at random, for the periods at which some of them were uttered are uncertain.

One day, during varnishing time in the exhibition, an eminent portrait painter was at work on the hand of one of his pictures: he turned to the Keeper, who was near him, and said, "Fuseli—Michael Angelo never painted such a hand."—"No, by Pluto," replied the other, "but you have, *many*." He had an inherent dislike to Opie; and some one, to please Fuseli, said, in allusion to the low characters in the historical pictures of "The Death of James the First of Scotland," and "The Murder of David Rizzio," that Opie could paint nothing but vulgarity and dirt. "If he paints nothing but dirt," said Fuseli, "he paints it like an angel." He was probably pleased to see the head of his enemy, Wolcot, figuring away on the shoulders of an assassin in the death of the royal poet. One day a painter who had been a student during the keepership of Wilton, called and said, "The students, Sir, don't draw so well now as they did under Joe Wilton." "Very true," replied Fuseli, "anybody may draw here, let them draw ever so bad—*you* may draw here, if you please!"

During the delivery of one of his lectures, wherein he calls landscape painters the topographers of art, Beechey admonished Turner with his elbow of the severity of the sarcasm: presently, when Fuseli described the patrons of portrait painting as men who would give a few guineas to have their own senseless heads painted, and then assume the air and use the language of patrons, Turner administered a similar hint to Beechey. When the lecture was over Beechey walked up to Fuseli, and said,

to set my name down as a candidate for the rank of Associate before the next election at the Royal Academy." Fuseli was always very particular as to his vote. We have heard before (see Life of West) of his voting for Mrs. Lloyd as President when West put up; and on another occasion, when asked to vote for an artist on the ground of his being an eminently respectable man, "Damn the respectable man!" he replied. "We want a man of talent. If you want to elect a respectable man, you had better take the parson of the parish; I daresay he is a very respectable man."—ED.

"How sharply you have been cutting up us poor labourers in portraiture!" "Not you, Sir William," exclaimed the professor; "I only spoke of the blasted fools who employ you." A man of some station in society, and who considered himself a powerful patron in art, said at a public dinner where he was charmed with Fuseli's conversation, "If ever you come my way, Fuseli, I shall be happy to see you." "I thank you," replied the painter, "but I never go your way—I never even go down your street, though I often pass by the end of it." He looked on a time on a serpent with its tail in its mouth, a commonplace emblem of eternity, which was carved upon an exhibited monument. "It won't do, I tell you," said Fuseli to the sculptor, "you must have something new." The *something new* startled a man whose imagination was none of the brightest, and he said, "How shall I find something new?" "Oh, nothing so easy," said Fuseli, "I'll help you to it. When I went away to Rome I left two fat men cutting fat bacon in St. Martin's Lane; in ten years' time I returned, and found the two fat men cutting fat bacon still; twenty years more have passed, and there the two fat fellows cut the fat flitches the same as ever. Carve them—if they look not like an image of eternity I wot not what does."

During the exhibition of his Milton Pictures he called at the banking-house of Mr. Coutts, saying he was going out of town for a few days, and wished to have some money in his pocket. "How much?" said one of the members of the firm. "How much?" said Fuseli. "Why, as much as twenty pounds; and as it is a large sum, and I don't wish to take your establishment by surprise, I have called to give you a day's notice of it!" "I thank you, Sir," said the cashier, imitating Fuseli's own tone of irony, "we shall be ready for you—but as the town is thin and money scarce with us, you will oblige me greatly by giving us a few orders to see your Milton Gallery—it will keep cash in our drawers, and hinder your exhibition from being empty." Fuseli shook him heartily by the hand, cried, "Blastation! and you shall have the tickets with all my heart; I have had the opinion of the virtuosi, the

dilettanti, the cognoscenti, and the nobles and the gentry on my pictures—and I want now the opinion of the blackguards. I shall send you and your friends a score of tickets, and thank you, too, for taking them."

His life, though not without disappointment, had been hitherto without sickness, and his spirits seemed inexhaustible, but old age had now come upon him and the end was drawing nigh. He had lived eighty years and upwards—enjoyed the world, and obtained no little distinction; nor was he insensible to the advantages which he had enjoyed. "I have been a happy man," he said, "for I have been always well, and always employed in doing what I liked;" a boast which few men of genius can make. When work with the pencil failed, he lifted the pen, and as he was ready and clever with both, he was never obliged to fill up unemployed time with jobs which he disliked.

He was an early riser, and generally sat down to breakfast with a book upon entomology in his hand. He ate and read and read and ate—regarding no one and speaking to no one. He was delicate and abstemious—and on gross feeders he often exercised the severity of his wit. Two meals a day were all he ventured on—he always avoided supper—the story of his having supped on raw pork chops that he might dream his picture of the nightmare has no foundation. Indeed, the dreams he delighted to relate were of the noblest kind, and consisted of galleries of the fairest pictures and statues, in which were walking the poets and painters of old. Having finished breakfast, and noted down some remarks on entomology, he went into his studio—painted till dinner time—dined hastily, if at home, and then resumed his labours, or else forgot himself over Homer, or Dante, or Shakespeare, or Milton, till midnight. He was subject to fits of despondency, and during the continuance of such moods he sat with his beloved book on entomology upon his knee—touched now and then the breakfast-cup with his lips, and seemed resolutely bent on being unhappy. In periods such as these it was difficult to rouse him, and even dangerous. Mrs. Fuseli, on such occasions, ventured to become his monitress. "I know him

well," she said one morning to a friend who found him in one of his dark moods, "he will not come to himself till he is put into a passion—the storm then clears off, and the man looks out serene." "Oh no," said her visitor, "let him alone for awhile—he will soon think rightly." He was spared till next morning—he came to the breakfast table in the same mood of mind. "Now I must try what I can do," said his wife to the same friend whom she had consulted the day before; she now began to reason with her husband, and soothe and persuade him; he answered only by a forbidding look and a shrug of the shoulder. She then boldly snatched away his book and dauntlessly abode the storm. The storm was not long in coming—his own fiend rises up not more furiously from the side of Eve than did the painter. He glared on his friend and on his wife—uttered an imprecation deeper than I dare write—rushed up stairs and strode about his room in great agitation. In a little while his steps grew more regular—he soon opened the door, and descended to his labours all smiles and good humour.

He was on a visit to the Countess of Guildford at Putney Hill, and having engaged to dine with Mr. Rogers the poet, along with Sir Thomas Lawrence and Mr. Ottley, was about to proceed to London, when he felt suddenly indisposed. Lady Guildford persuaded him to send an apology, which he wrote with reluctance—he went to bed, and grew worse and worse. Doctors Holland and Crichton, two skilful physicians, were called in—but nature, which had lasted long, was manifestly giving way, and all aid proved unavailing. Fuseli was perfectly calm and quite conscious of his situation. "My friend," he said to Mr. Knowles, who hurried from London to see him, "I am going to that bourne whence no traveller returns." He spoke with the same cheerful resignation and calmness to Lady Guildford and her accomplished daughters, who watched over him with much solicitude, and seemed uneasy and restless when Sir Thomas Lawrence, who admired and loved him, was away from his side. Early in the morning of the fifth day of his illness a fatal change in his looks was visible—he seemed aware of this—he looked

anxiously round the room—said several times in a low and agitated voice, "Is Lawrence come—is Lawrence come?" and then appeared to listen for the sound of the chariot wheels which brought his friend once a-day from London to his bed-side. He raised himself up a little—then sank down and died, on the 16th of April, 1825, in the 84th year of his age.

For the character of Henry Fuseli, personal and mental, I willingly transcribe the words of Lavater; they are less the offspring of his wild speculations in physiognomy than the settled convictions of his heart and mind; it is to be remembered that our artist and he were early and attached companions. "The curve which describes the profile in whole is obviously one of the most remarkable: it indicates an energetic character which spurns at the idea of trammels. The forehead, by its contours and position, is more suited to the poet than the thinker. I perceive in it more force than gentleness—the fire of imagination rather than the coolness of reason. The nose seems to be the seat of an intrepid genius. The mouth promises a spirit of application and precision, and yet it costs the original the greatest effort to give the finishing touch to the smallest piece. Any one may see, without my telling it, that this character is not destitute of ambition, and that the sense of his own merit escapes him not. It may also be suspected that he is subject to impetuous emotions, but will any one say that he loves with tenderness—with warmth to excess? Though capable of the greatest actions, to him the slightest complaisance is an effort. His imagination is ever aiming at the sublime and delighting itself with prodigies. Nature intended him for a great poet, a great painter, and a great orator—but, to borrow his own words, 'inexorable fate does not always proportion the will to our powers; it sometimes assigns a copious proportion of will to minds whose faculties are very contracted, and frequently associates with the greatest faculties a will feeble and impotent.'"

This, we must confess, is a shining but not very amiable character—a less theatrical description may not be unacceptable. Fuseli was of low stature—his frame slim, his

forehead high, and his eyes piercing and brilliant. His look was proud, and often sarcastic—his movements were quick, and by an eager activity of manner he seemed desirous of occupying as much space as belonged to men of greater stature. His voice was loud and commanding—nor had he learned much of the art of winning his way by gentleness and persuasion—he was more anxious to say pointed and stinging things than solicitous about their accuracy; and he had much pleasure in mortifying his brethren of the easel with his wit and overwhelming them with his knowledge. He was too often morose and unamiable—habitually despising those who were not his friends, and not unapt to dislike even his best friends, if they retorted his wit, or defended themselves successfully against his satire. In dispute he was eager, fierce, unsparing, and frequently precipitated himself into angry discussions with the Council, which, however, always ended in peace and good humour—for he was as placable as passionate. On one occasion he flew into his own room in a storm of passion, and having cooled and come to himself, was desirous to return; the door was locked and the key gone; his fury overflowed all bounds. "Sam!" he shouted to the porter, "Sam Strowager, they have locked me in like a blasted wild beast—bring crowbars and break open the door." The porter—a sagacious old man, who knew the trim of the Keeper—whispered through the keyhole, "Feel in your pocket, Sir, for the key!" He did so, and unlocking the door, with a loud laugh exclaimed, "What a fool—never mind—I'll to the Council, and soon show them they are greater asses than myself."

With all these impediments in the way of popularity, Fuseli was generally liked, and by none more than by the students who were so often made the objects of his satire. They were sensible that he was assiduous in instruction—that he was very learned and very skilful, and that he allowed no one else to take liberties with their conduct or their pursuits. He had a tact like that of inspiration in singling out the most intellectual of the pupils—he was the first to notice Lawrence, and at the very outset of

Wilkie he predicted his future eminence. He was so near-sighted that he was obliged to retire from his easel to a distance and examine his labours by means of an opera glass, then return and retouch and retire again and look. This imperfection was seriously in his way to eminence, and helps to account for a certain hardness of anatomical detail visible even in his best works.[1] His weakness of sight was well known, and one of the students in revenge for some satirical strictures, placed a bench in his way, over which he nearly fell. "Bless my soul," said the Keeper, "I must put spectacles upon my shins." This sally of wit saved him probably from falling into a passion.

Men interpreted Fuseli's frequent complaints of want of encouragement in his art as tantamount to an acknowledgment of poverty. He became a member of the Academy at the urgent request of his wife, in order that she might be sure of forty pounds annually in case of his death; and the Royal Academy bestowed the Keepership upon him in order to avoid the reproach of permitting a man of his learning and genius to suffer from want in his old age. To the surprise of his executors and the astonishment of his brethren, he died comparatively rich. How he had contrived to hoard, no one could divine; the sums which he received for his paintings were not large; the earnings of his pen could be but moderate, and in his native land he inherited no patrimony. He lived at little expense, it is true—but frugality cannot soon make six or seven thousand pounds out of a small income. I hesitate to mention, what I suspect is the truth, that opulent friends paid him more than he charged for his pictures, in the belief that such kindness was not unseasonable, and that Fuseli wanted the fortitude to confess that he had no real occasion for such benevolence.

[1] This assertion as to his being near-sighted is discredited by Leslie, who says that his impression, on the contrary, was that "his sight was remarkably good at any distance." It is probable, however, that Allan Cunningham was right, for Knowles records that his eyesight remained so good that, even to the last period of his life, he was able to read the smallest print without the aid of spectacles. This is generally the case with near-sighted persons.—Ed.

As a painter, his merits are of no common order. He was no timid and creeping adventurer in the region of art, but a man peculiarly bold and daring—who rejoiced only in the vast, the wild, and the wonderful, and loved to measure himself with any subject, whether in the heaven above, the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth. The domestic and humble realities of life he considered unworthy of his pencil, and employed it only on those high or terrible themes where imagination may put forth all her strength, and fancy scatter all her colours. He associated only with the demigods of verse, and roamed through Homer, and Dante, and Shakespeare, and Milton, in search of subjects worthy of his hand; he loved to grapple with whatever he thought too weighty for others; and assembling round him the dim shapes which imagination readily called forth, sat brooding over the chaos, and tried to bring the whole into order and beauty. He endeavoured anxiously to

> "Produce those permanent and perfect forms,
> Those characters of heroes and of gods,
> Which from the crude materials of the world
> His own high mind created."

But poetry had invested them with a diviner pomp than Fuseli could command, and it was on these occasions that he complained of his inability to work up to the conceptions of his fancy. He had splendid dreams, but like those of Eve, they were sometimes disturbed by a demon, and passed away for ever before he could embody them.

His main wish was to startle and astonish—it was his ambition to be called Fuseli the daring and the imaginative, the illustrator of Milton and Shakespeare, the rival of Michael Angelo. Out of the seventy exhibited paintings on which he reposed his hope of fame, not one can be called commonplace—they are all poetical in their nature, and as poetically treated. Some twenty of these alarm, startle, and displease; twenty more may come within the limits of common comprehension; the third twenty are such as few men could produce, and deserve a place in the noblest collections; while the remaining ten are equal in

conception to anything that genius has hitherto produced, and second only in their execution to the true and recognized masterpieces of art. It cannot be denied, however, that a certain air of extravagance and a desire to stretch and strain is visible in most of his works. A common mind, having no sympathy with his soaring, perceives his defects at once, and ranks him with the wild and unsober—a poetic mind will not allow the want of serenity and composure to extinguish the splendour of the conception; but whilst it notes the blemish, will feel the grandeur of the work. The approbation of high minds fixes the degree of fame to which genius of all degrees is entitled, and the name of Fuseli is safe.

His colouring is like his design, original; it has a kind of supernatural hue, which harmonizes with many of his subjects—the spirits of the other state and the hags of hell are steeped in a kind of kindred colour, which becomes their characters. His notion of colour suited the wildest of his subjects, and the hue of Satan and the lustre of Hamlet's Ghost are part of the imagination of those supernatural shapes. Yet, original as his colouring is, and suitable to the scenes which it often embodies, it seems unnatural when applied to earthly flesh and blood, and communicates hues which belong to other worlds rather than to the sons and daughters of Adam. It is to be praised rather than imitated, and would be out of harmony with subjects of common emotion and every-day life.

His sketches are very numerous, amounting to eight hundred, and show the varied knowledge and vigorous imagination of the man. He busied himself during his hours of leisure with making sketches and drawings from scenes which had occurred in his reading, or had arisen on his fancy; in this manner he illustrated the whole range of poetry, ancient and modern. Those who are only acquainted with Fuseli through his paintings know little of the extent of his genius; they should see him in his designs and drawings, to feel his powers and know him rightly. The variety of those productions is truly wonderful, and their poetic feeling and historic grandeur more wonderful still. It is surprising too how little of

that extravagance of posture and action which offends in his large paintings is present here; they are for the most part uncommonly simple and serene performances.

Scattered amongst those sketches, we are sometimes startled by the appearance of a lady floating gracefully along in fashionable attire—her patches, paint, and jewels on—and armed for doing mischief amongst the sons of modern men. There is no attempt at caricature—they are fac-similes, and favourable ones, of existing life and fashion. Their presence amongst the works we have described jars upon our feelings—they are out of keeping with the poetic simplicity of their companions, and look as strange as court ladies would do taking the air with the Apollo and the dying Gladiator. They do, however, what the painter meant. They tell us how contemptible everything is save natural elegance and simple grandeur, and that much which gives splendour to a ball or levée, will never mingle with what is lofty or lasting.

His love of the loose wit and free humour of the old writers of Italy and England was great; as he read them he chuckled with pleasure, and taking up his pencil lent form to such scenes as gladdened his fancy. Those works are entitled to the praise of poetic freedom and vivacity—the humour and the wit triumph over all other levities—and sense has generally the better of sensuality. Fire, however, fell amongst most of these when he died—nor do I blame the hand of his widow who kindled it.

We cannot contemplate the portfolios of his serious drawings, opened to us by their possessor, Sir Thomas Lawrence,[1] without being struck with the extraordinary genius of Fuseli, and lamenting the blindness and deficiency of taste of the age in which he lived. Had he received anything like adequate encouragement, public feeling would have awed down his extravagance of imagination, and those compositions, now consigned to the cabinet of his eminent friend, would have been expanded into pictures and adorning the galleries of our country. Of all

[1] This kind and generous man is now lost to us. His life, if the author be spared to complete another volume of this work, will be included.

the painters whom this country has encouraged—they are not, indeed, many—no one had either the reach of thought or the poetic feeling of Fuseli—he had comprehension for all that is great, and imagination for all that is lofty.

Of his literary compositions something more should be said—I rank them high, and yet considerably below the efforts of his pencil. He affected to strike out remarkable sentences and express characters by a few weighty words—to utter instructions pointed and oracular; to season sound counsel with shrewd wit, and by the use of poetic diction give warmth and energy to the whole. To accomplish this, generally, required a better disciplined mind, and perhaps a better acquaintance with our language than he possessed; but in many passages his success is splendid. He always feels well—often deeply; but the great fault is that he seldom allows the stream of his mind to run smoothly along; he leads it astray into artificial falls, and bewilders it in links and serpentines. He had such a high opinion of his own acuteness and wisdom, that he wrote a whole volume of Aphorisms on Art—three hundred in number; some of these are said to be acute—some sensible—some profound, and a great many visionary. He also began a regular history of his art, but stopped at Michael Angelo. The fragment is yet unpublished.

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JAMESONE.

GEORGE JAMESONE, called by Walpole the Vandyke of Scotland, a Presbyterian, and if tradition may be trusted, a poet, was the son of Andrew Jameson, architect, and born at Aberdeen in the year 1586,[1] on the day on which his native queen was beheaded by her implacable cousin at Fotheringay. Neither the times in which he was born, nor the religion in which he had been educated, were favourable to elegant tastes, yet a strong love of art came upon him; though at what age, or in what manner, no one has related. That it came early, we may conjecture from the proficiency which he attained; and that the stimulus proceeded from the profession of his father, then more closely connected with the sister arts than now, can hardly be doubted, since we find no trace of any contemporary school or professor of art in his native place. But yesterday a reformation in religion, above all others fierce and desolating, had cast the magnificent abbeys and monasteries of Scotland to the ground, and destroyed their images and paintings, as things idolatrous: good examples in any of the fine arts must therefore have been scarce, and the aspiring student must have found himself surrounded with difficulties such as true genius alone could surmount. Amidst all the facilities which modern galleries and academies afford, the progress of the most

[1] It will be seen that the life of Jamesone comes quite out of the chronological order that Cunningham adopted with respect to the other painters of whom he has written. He apparently gleaned the interesting information he has here given after the publication of his short account of this painter in the Introduction, and so added it where best he could. It has been thought better to leave it in its original unchronological position rather than incur the awkwardness of placing Jamesone first in the line of our British painters. Though an excellent painter in his way, he did not, like Hogarth, begin an epoch in British art.—Ed.

gifted is slow and painful—what must have been his case who had few examples and no instructors?

However he came by it, Jamesone acquired such skill in painting as attracted the notice of his countrymen: he was advised to seek abroad what he could not find at home; and had the good sense or the good fortune to establish himself in the studio of Rubens, with whom he remained for several years in the company of Vandyke. We know that in the year 1619 Vandyke left his great master and went into Italy; and the inscription on a picture by Jamesone informs us that in 1623 he was a husband and a father, and pursuing his profession in Scotland.[1] It is, therefore, probable that the latter was some thirty years old before he visited the Netherlands—a ripe age; yet students of threescore years and more are not unknown to academies. I have seen William Blake, within a few years of his death, studying at Somerset House with all the ardour of youth, and other names not less distinguished might be cited.

Many may be inclined to wonder that any such being as a painter should have existed in Scotland during the stormy days of the Covenant, much more that he should have flourished, become famous, and acquired a fortune; but the truth is, that the fierce discipline of Knox was soon softened, and that in matters of taste and elegance the Presbyterians of the North were by no means so furious and uncompromising as the Puritans and Independents of the South. Even during the half century that followed the first dawn of the Scottish reformation, plays were allowed to be enacted, and none of the flock were forbidden to attend such exhibitions, save elders and deacons. In short, the sour austerity so much satirized by poets and ridiculed by historians did not descend in full force till the period of the great civil war. The love of poetry, and painting, and architecture, spread from King James

[1] Samuel Redgrave, who is generally correct in such matters, states that Jamesone returned to Aberdeen in 1620, and married there in 1624. He does not, however, give his authority for these dates; and it is evident that if this picture—a portrait of his wife and child—were painted at the date Cunningham gives, Redgrave must be wrong.—Ed.

amongst his nobles north and south; and his two gifted sons formed collections, and patronized genius, with all the liberality which a turbulent and economical House of Commons would allow. Jamesone, when he returned from foreign study, found painting a not unhonoured profession among the northern presbyterians, and was employed to execute many portraits of distinguished covenanters as well as cavaliers.

It has been said, sarcastically, that in this nationality overcame the aversion to a profane art, and that the natural love of all men for what is strange and first seen was too strong for the discipline of the kirk; but foreign artists had formerly been employed to do what a native was able to perform now; and those who have acquainted themselves with the antiquities of the North need not be told that works of art, rivalling at least those with which Catholic architecture had adorned itself in England, were largely diffused over Scotland, both main-land and isle. The Church of Rome, the mother of much that is useful and elegant, had from early ages captivated the people by her carved processions of saints and her painted miracles and legends. The kings, too, had not only patronized works of genius, but some of them excelled personally in poetry, music, and architecture; tapestry, representing passages from Scripture or from the poets, abounded; sculptured tombs in freestone or in marble were to be found in every church; and even the wildest of the Western Isles show, in the present day, such relics of old magnificence, as excite the admiration of travellers. That the sculptures of the most splendid abbeys, and the paintings in the castles of the nobles, were altogether unworthy of being classed among finished works of art, no one questions: yet, at the same time, the conception often showed true poetic feeling; and we cannot deny that, in selecting the subjects from Scripture, Scottish history, and poetry, the men of that day showed a taste which might be a lesson in the present. Some have seen—and I think there is truth in the remark—more of those formal shapes and attitudes, than of the fine freedom and natural ease of Rubens, in the works of Jamesone. It is seldom that a

style acquired by much study and hard labour, as his must have been in the absence of all instruction, can be relinquished even when a better offers itself: the old man with his deeds is too hard for regeneration; and neither hand nor mind willingly undertake a new task. He learned the light and shade of colours in the company of Vandyke; but it is more than probable that he grounded his style upon the older and ruder models of his own country.

Of the elder artists of Scotland, and their works, little has been either said or written. A few names, and dates, and references, have been preserved in the Royal Book of Accounts: imperfect as such memorandums are, they are interesting. To these we shall add such information as the casual mention of historians, allusions of poets, and tradition have supplied. The first name on the royal record is evidently a native one—it is that of John de Linlithgow, who, in the year 1329, sculptured the tomb of the great Robert Bruce; the second is that of "Andrew the painter," who made a monument in memory of David Bruce and his queen. Artists in those days were both sculptors and painters; and it was the fashion to paint, and gild, and inlay with precious metal and with precious stones, the recumbent statues of our sepulchral monuments. Nor were the labours of those men confined to the church. The great hall in the castle of the renowned Randolph Earl of Murray, was a work of no common magnificence, and must have cost much money and time. It was eighty-nine feet long, thirty-five feet wide, and thirty feet high, roofed with massive beams of carved oak, and ornamented with sculptures. The oaken dining-table and chair of the warrior are still preserved: the former stands on six pillars, curiously bordered and inlaid; and the latter, in shape and fashion not unlike the old coronation chair in Westminster Abbey, is emblazoned with carvings of his family arms and emblems of his station as regent.

Paintings in fresco, and even in oil, existed in Scotland centuries before the appearance of Jamesone. They were chiefly Scripture pieces or portraits of distinguished men;

and of the latter, there was one with which he must have been early acquainted. I allude to that likeness in fresco, of William the Lyon, supposed to have belonged to the monastery of the Trinity Friars of Aberdeen, of which that king was the founder. It is now in the Trinity Hall of that city; measures four feet high by two feet nine inches wide, and bears the following inscription,—of course of a later age than the picture:—"St. William, King of Scots, surnamed the Lyon, the first founder of the Trinitie Friars at Aberdeen, where he had his chappell, the chief place of retirement for his devotions. He reigned 49 years, beginning 1165, dyed at Striveling 1214, and was buried at Aberbrothwick." In the parish church of Houston, Renfrewshire, are still preserved the effigies or portraits of Sir John Houston and his lady; they seem to be in oil —I say seem, because they are so much decayed as to be almost illegible; they belong to a series of monuments commemorating the house of Houston. The knight is in complete armour; his lady, Mary Colquhoun, is in the dress of the time, 1400: they closely resemble the works of the same period still preserved in England. The portrait of Cardinal Innes, in the collection of the Scottish Society of Antiquaries, is believed to be the work of foreign hands. He is represented in the act of composing: books occupy the background; and an inscription says he is a native of Scotland, flourished in the year 1412, and wrote these volumes. Pinkerton assigns to the year 1430 the following story, in which barbarous deeds mingle with art perhaps equally barbarous:—A Highland robber having stolen a poor woman's cow, she vowed to wear no shoes till she told the king. On this the savage seized her, and, in ridicule of her vow, nailed horse-shoes on her feet. On recovering, she went to the palace, told her story, and showed the scars on her feet. The monarch caused the savage to be secured and tried. On conviction, he was clothed in a canvas frock on which was painted a man fixing horse-shoes on a woman's feet, exhibited two days in the streets of Perth, and then dragged at a horse's tail to the gallows, and hanged.

James I. of Scotland, a poet of no common genius, and

a musician of some skill, was also a painter of miniatures, and an illuminator of books. None of the works of this royal pencil have reached us; but he who could write with such good feeling, could no doubt imagine works of art worthy of living. Illuminated manuscripts and miniatures are perishable matters; and, not to speak of time and bad keeping, the fire of the reformers found its way so effectually among libraries, that few works of that period remain:—one only, Fordun's Scotichronicon, containing only some four or five illuminations, is preserved among Bishop Parker's books in the library of Christ's College, Cambridge. Heraldic painting, a sort of hieroglyphic history of families, was long popular. On the execution of Murdoc Duke of Albany, and his sons, in the year 1425, they were buried on the south side of the altar, in the Black Friars' Church at Stirling, and over them were placed paintings of their persons and their coats armorial. In the reign of the saints in 1643, this sort of harmless emblazonment, which had survived Knox and all his fierce companions, was declared infamous. The General Assembly of the Kirk perceived something of Baal and Ashtaroth in the armorial bearings suspended in places of worship when persons of note or family died, and passed a prohibitory act "against burials and hanging of pensils and brods, and offering of honours and arms, and such like scandalous monuments, in the kirk." Having destroyed their splendid abbeys, they possessed, no doubt, in those days few kirks worthy of hanging either pensils, or honours, or arms in.

The reign of James III. was inglorious in arms, and had a tragic ending; nevertheless he was a prince skilful in architecture, and an encourager of men of taste and talent. He built the great Hall of Stirling Castle, with the splendid chapel: the former was adorned with much fine carving, and the latter contained that singular altar-piece thus described by Pinkerton:—"This celebrated picture, in the form of a folding altarpiece, is painted on both sides, and divided into four compartments. The first represents the king kneeling; behind him is his son, a youth about twelve years of age, which ascertains

the date (1482), with St. Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland. The royal crown is not arched, nor was, apparently, till the reign of James V., when new regalia were ordered; but it has high fleurons of great richness: the robe is of a lilac hue, furred with ermine; the vest, cloth of gold. In the second compartment, the queen appears, also kneeling, in a kirtle of cloth of gold and blue robe; her head-dress one blaze of gold and jewels; the arms, depicted with exact heraldry, indicate the daughter of Denmark; and behind her is a personage in plate armour, apparently her father, in the character of St. Canute, the patron of his kingdom. Of the two compartments on the reverse of this grand piece, one represents the Trinity. In the other an ecclesiastic kneels; but his heraldry of three buckles and a chevron can hardly be traced, except to the obscure[1] family of Bonkil in the Merse. Behind is a kind of organ with two angels, not of ideal beauty, and perhaps portraits of the king's two sisters, Lady Mary Hamilton, and Margaret, then unmarried—a conjecture supported by the uncommon ornament of a coronet on the head of one of the angels. Hardly can any kingdom in Europe boast of a more noble family picture of this early epoch; and it is in itself a convincing specimen of the attention of James III. to the fine arts." This royal altar-piece hung till lately (perhaps it still hangs) in Kensington Palace: and, amid all the vicissitudes of fortune which it had undergone, looked perfect and even beautiful, surrounded as it was by the works of Holbein and Vandyke. Of the hand that painted this earliest of the authentic portraits of the Scottish kings, the treasurer's books contain no account, neither has tradition preserved any memory. The royal memorandums of that reign have been, indeed, almost all destroyed.

The chivalrous and unhappy James IV. was a warm admirer of poetry, painting, and sculpture: his queen, too, joined with him in this; and went so far as to permit poetical incense of a very questionable purity to be offered

[1] Pinkerton must have had some odd fancy in his head when he called this family *obscure*. It was closely connected with the two great houses of Douglas and Stewart.

to her by the bards. Dunbar, a genius of a high order, repeatedly alludes to the sister arts: in one of his dreams, he employs a painter to ornament his humble abode:—

> "This hinder night, half sleeping as I lay,
> Methought my chamber in a new array
> Was all depaynt with many divers hue
> Of all the noble stories old and new
> Sen our first father formed was of clay."

And in another of his poems he thus commemorates the professions which flourished under his royal master:—

> "Cunyouris, Carvouris, and Carpentaris,
> Beilders of barkis and ballingaris,
> Masounis bygand upon the land,
> And Schip-wrichtis hewand upon the strand;
> Glasing-wrichtis, Goldsmythis, and Lapedaris,
> Pryatouris, Payntouris, and Potingaris."

The account-books fortunately preserved of James's short reign show the munificence of his spirit. He largely encouraged foreign artists; yet Scotsmen were not wanting, as the names of John Pratt, Sir Thomas Galbraith (a churchman, most probably), Andrew Laing, and Alexander Chalmers, all mentioned as employed in decorating the palaces of Stirling and Falkland, sufficiently attest. There must, no doubt, have been many portraits of this munificent prince; but the only one in oil that now is known to exist, is that in Sir Walter Scott's dining-room at Abbotsford, bearing the date of 1507.[1] It is a piece not unworthy of the hand of Holbein—exhibiting a pale, melancholy countenance, stamped not less visibly than Vandyke's portraits of Charles I. with the lines of a dark fate. From the date, it may have been done in France during the king's travels.

James V. inherited all the abilities and taste of his father, with the addition of a genius in poetry of no com-

[1] There were two portraits of James IV. exhibited at the First National Portrait Exhibition, the one (lent by the late Sir William Stirling Maxwell) was by Mytens, and was stated to have belonged to Charles I.; the other (lent by the Marquis of Lothian) went by the name of Holbein. —Ed.

mon order. He was fond of the fine arts; but his magnificent spirit suited ill with the poverty of the North, and with the turbulence of his nobles. His palace at Stirling was long one of the wonders of Scotland, more particularly for the carved roof of the presence chamber, which was of Scottish oak, divided into panels, and ornamented with some forty and odd heads of most delicate carving, representing, it is believed, the portraits of the King and his chief nobles. The workmanship of these was imputed to foreign artists: but Lord Strathallan's "History of the House of Drummond," together with the treasurer's books, prove that they were the work of John Drummond of Auchterarder, master of works to James V., assisted, it is believed, by "Andro Wood, Carvour," one of the court workmen. This splendid roof was destroyed in the year 1777, when Stirling Castle was converted into barracks—in fact, it was thrown into the streets as rubbish: but some citizens, in whom the true spirit of their country still lingered, gathered the heads together, and as many were preserved as formed an interesting volume called "Lacunar Strevelinense," in which etchings were given of the chief relics. In like manner the palace of Falkland was adorned with carved heads surrounded with rich foliages; they are cut in stone, and may be still seen in the inner court: time has injured them sorely, but they preserve the air of individual portraits.

The personal and romantic adventures of James, and the dissensions which unhappily arose between him and his nobility, did not hinder him from bestowing attention on painting and poetry. A remarkable picture, containing portraits of himself and his Queen, Mary of Guise, is now in the worthy keeping of the Duke of Devonshire. The figures are less than life, the colours much faded: they are not a little stiff; but there is a look of nature about both. At the top are the arms of Scotland; at the bottom, the conjugal arms of the houses of Stuart and Guise, with inscriptions recording that she was then twenty-four years old, and the King twenty-eight. The hair of both inclines more to red than to auburn; Mary has a red-and-white carnation in her hand; James holds a jewel with St.

Andrew, and on his bonnet is a gold medal minutely finished.

The melancholy reign of Mary Stuart has few names of artists either native or foreign; yet paintings abounded in her day. A list of those of her own and preceding reigns would occupy a large space: even portraits of herself are so numerous as to deserve a long dissertation. Of these latter, it may be right to remark that none of them give us an image of surpassing comeliness, and not one of them can be proved to have been copied from the life. In the collection of Charles I. was a small whole-length, stated in the catalogue to have been brought from Scotland: this was probably painted from the life, as were also those which belonged to the kings of France: for it is known that she sat in Paris to the court painters, Janet and Pourbus the elder. The far greater part of her reign was occupied with matters of a nature too stern for the pencil of the portrait painter to make records of court beauties and handsome cavaliers. Infatuated by her own affections, bewildered and browbeat by contending factions in religion, insulted, persecuted, and driven into exile and imprisonment by the ferocity of her nobles and the perfidy of her own brother, and finally led to an unmerited death by a cousin and a queen, Mary had little leisure to display the endowments of her race, or call elegance and art into existence. Arts, indeed, may be said to have perished in her reign. The Reformers preached a rigorous crusade against all images in stone or on canvas, and, in the purification of the cathedrals, destroyed all that claimed aught in common with the human figure. Statues of princes, nobles, warriors, saints working miracles, and legends of the Church; Christ judging the world at the last day; and Satan playing on the bagpipe to a dance of devils;—all were alike condemned, cast out, and destroyed. In one little isle of the west, one hundred and sixty stone crosses, most of them beautifully embellished, were in one day tossed ignominiously into the sea. The rage against statues was especially severe: they were considered as near of kin to the clay images used in witchcraft; and learned men hesitated not to pronounce them so many wicked

spells by which the Scarlet Witch of the Seven Hills had subjected men's souls.

Though "Ruin, with her sweeping besom," had marched thus fierce and triumphant over Scottish art, no sooner was the kirk settled, and the public mind in repose, than painting—one branch at least—held up its head. A love of portraiture seems part of British nature. James II. continued his sitting to Kneller, though he heard that the Prince of Orange had landed; even during the storming of the cathedrals, and the fierce sermons of Knox, artists had sittings from the Lords of the Congregation. A family-piece of the Setons of Winton has been ascribed to Sir Antonio More, and also to Zucchero. It is thus described by Sir Walter Scott: "After the battle of Langside, Lord Seton was obliged to retire abroad for safety, and was an exile for two years, during which he was reduced to the necessity of driving a waggon in Flanders for a subsistence. He rose to favour in James VI.'s reign; and, resuming his paternal property, had himself painted, in his waggoner's dress and in the act of driving a wain with four horses, on the north end of a stately gallery at Seton Castle. He appears to have been fond of the arts, for there exists a beautiful family-piece of him in the centre of his family. The original is the property of Lord Somerville, nearly connected with the Seton family, and is at present at his Lordship's fishing villa of the Pavilion, near Melrose."—"This was so valuable a painting," says an elder authority, "that when Charles I. came to Scotland, in 1633, being at Seton House, his Majesty, during the time of dinner, had his eyes constantly fixed on that picture; which the Earl of Winton observing, offered it in a present to the King; but he declined accepting it, saying, that he would never rob the family of so inestimable a jewel."

James VI. extended encouragement to art as far as his extreme poverty and the parsimony of his parliaments would allow. Painting began to extend from portraiture to history, and sculpture also reappeared. The unfortunate Ruthven, Earl of Gowrie, according to Hume of Godscroft, built a fair gallery, and "decorated it with pictures;" and in the great gallery of the old palace of Scone,

begun by the same earl, were various paintings in water-colours. "The roof of the gallery," says one of our ablest antiquaries, "was of wood, in the shape of the lid of an old-fashioned bandbox; the ground white; the groups of figures were in ovals, with a border like the frame of a picture. In every one that I remember was King James, the principal figure, on horseback, surrounded by his courtiers, mounted also. He had always his high-crowned hat and yellow beard, and his face much larger than those of his attendants. I remember no ovals on any other subject but that of the King's sports. The roof around these representations was daubed over with heads and harpies, &c., the whole very ill done, and much spoilt when I saw the house." Nor among these royal residences is the house of Ravelstone, built by George Fowlis in 1603, unworthy of being mentioned. On the ceiling of the principal apartment were painted the amusements and occupations of men in the twelve months of the year, each distinguished by the corresponding sign of the zodiac. The centre was occupied by a group of angels, drawn up in a circle: and performing a concert of vocal and instrumental music: one of the youngest, as in duty bound, playing on the bagpipe. A tragic story, connected with painting, is related in Pitcairn's "Criminal Trials:"—One Archibald Cornwall, a town-officer of Edinburgh, having seized some furniture for debt, carried it to the market-cross to be disposed of. Among the articles were portraits of James VI. and his Queen. These royal heads, it seems, the unfortunate man, thoughtlessly perhaps, proposed to hang on the public gibbet, and fixed a nail for the purpose; when the people, aware of the danger, or resenting the disgrace, interposed, and prevented further exposure. The King, who would have forgiven an insult to his person, but not to his picture, was deeply incensed. Cornwall was tried, convicted, and executed within the brief space of twenty-four hours; and the Town Council, returning from the execution, made it a law, "that nane of their Majesties or Graces pictures or portraits be poyndet, rouppet, or compryset for any manner of cause."

Art, such as it was, had done its part to honour King-

James; and when his Queen arrived from Denmark, the 19th of May, 1590, all the classic lore and skill in public pageantry seem to have been called into active service. Among other matters the contemporary rhymes of Birrell, an honest burgher of the place, dwell at great length on the historic tapestries and "images and antics auld," which were everywhere displayed on "the stairs and houses of the town." The principal pageant seems to have been made up of much the same material that some twenty years afterwards formed the staple commodity of the court masks of Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones:—

"It written was with stories mae,
How Venus with a thundering thud,
Inclosed Achates and Enae,
Within a meekel mistic clud;
And how fair Anna's wondrous wraith
Deplors her sister's Dido's daith.

"Io with goldin glittering hair
Was portret wondrous properlie,
And Polipheme was pentit thair,
Quha in his forehead had an ee.
Beneath him but ane little space,
Was Janus with the double face," &c. &c.

The more to enhance the merits of the exhibition,—

—— "At her entrie at the ports,
Trim harangs till her Grace was maid;
Her salutation thair was sung
In ornate style of the Latine tung."

English readers will, it is hoped, pardon this retrospective view of matters, which must possess considerable interest for all Scottish ones. To conclude, the British Solomon, in 1603, carried his notions of royal right, and his taste for poetry, painting, and pageantry, into England; and art in Scotland, left without encouragement, suffered an eclipse till the return of Jamesone from the school of Rubens.

He set up his easel in his native city, in the year 1620, in the thirty-fourth year of his age; and the first-fruits of his study were landscape and history. It was, we may suppose, his desire to found a school in which works akin

to poetry, and owing their excellence more to imagination than to reality, should take the lead; and for a while he seems to have persisted in this unprofitable dream. Like others in latter days, he could only be taught by the cold touch of experience, that painting, dismissed as an auxiliary from the church, is, in Britain at least, considered only as a more genteel method of embalming and preserving the shapes and looks of the high-born and the wealthy; or as an humble handmaid of architecture, to embellish her coved ceilings and her naked walls. As an art capable of exciting a pleasure all its own, few then regarded it; and fewer still thought of laying out their money on detached poetic pictures of dead or living nature. The leading people of the time were, however, attracted to Jamesone's studio, by the beauty of his drawing and the transparent splendour of his colouring; and he was gradually induced, after the usual fashion of those who do not wish their days to pass without profit, to forsake the fields of fancy for those of living life. No doubt, then, we must assign to the first years after his return his paintings of the Sybils, still preserved in the North; which owe, tradition avers, some part of their fascination to the good looks of a lady of Aberdeen; several landscapes, of which no other account can be rendered, than that they were small and remarkable for the clearness of their colours and the accuracy of their perspective; his "Book of Scripture Sketches," "containing," according to the words of his will, "two hundred leaves of parchment of excellent write adorned with divers historys of our Saviour curiously limned," valued at two hundred pounds—and a picture of Medea, of which I can find no particular account anywhere. With this we may close our account of Jamesone's historic attempts, unless we admit into the number that singular piece of his at Cullen House, allegorically expressive of the fortunes of Charles I.; and which may be considered as a successful prediction, since the painter died before the prince. This work, which is three feet eight inches high, and two feet eight inches broad, shows the British crown overturned, with the sceptre, and other symbols of kingly power, scattered confusedly around; while Charles himself, in-

differently drawn, seems to be contemplating the disorder of his regalia.

Soon after Jamesone's return to Scotland, he married Isabel Tosh, a lady of his native city, who (besides several sons, who all died in their youth,) bore him one daughter, who lived to be thrice married, and to be the mother of three different families, in whose descendants the painter survives to this day. One of his earliest works is a portrait of his wife, his infant son, and himself, painted in 1623. The former has roses in her hands, and a tartan scarf thrown gracefully over her head, displaying a fine person, with a cap of pointed lace, and a lace tippet rising close to her chin; the painter holds his pallet and brushes in his hand, and looks over his wife's shoulder: his eyes are very dark, his brow broad, and he wears moustaches, and the tuft of beard on the chin, like the cavaliers of that period.[1] His fame soon spread beyond Aberdeen; and he was induced to transfer his residence to Edinburgh, where the delicacy and softness of his touch, and his broad clear style of colouring, gained him general admiration, and, it would appear, constant employment. But for Rubens and Vandyke, who then filled the eye of London, he would probably have gone at once to the seat of the court. But, however this might have been, at Edinburgh he halted, content to be the first in his own land.

"When King Charles visited Scotland in 1663," says Walpole, "the magistrates of Edinburgh, knowing his Majesty's taste, employed Jamesone to make drawings of the Scottish monarchs, with which the King was so much pleased, that, inquiring for the painter, he sat to him, and rewarded him with a diamond ring from his own finger." I know not where Walpole found this anecdote, but part of it is confirmed by northern testimony:—"The magistrates of Edinburgh," says Mr. George Chalmers, "desi-

[1] In the collection of Lord Alva, there is a portrait by Jamesone of Prince Henry, which, if copied from life, must have been painted long before this portrait of his family. The Prince died in 1612, before Jamesone studied abroad; and as the picture is not suspected to be a copy from another work, it is not improbable that Henry, who was a lover of art and a collector, may have sat to his countryman.

rous to pay a compliment to the King's taste in painting, begged of Jamesone to allow them the use of as many of the portraits done by him as could be gathered together. These were hung up on each side of the Netherbow Port, through which the royal cavalcade was to pass. This exhibition so attracted the King's attention, that he stopped his horse for a considerable time, and expressed his admiration of the good painting, and remarked the likeness to some of those they were done for. This was a lucky circumstance for Jamesone, for the King, while at Edinburgh, sat for a full-length picture; and having heard that Jamesone had been accustomed to wear his hat while at work, by reason of a complaint in his head, his Majesty very humanely ordered him to be covered; which privilege he ever thereafter thought himself entitled to in whatever company he was." To reconcile these two accounts we must have recourse to tradition, which avers that Jamesone to render the pageant prepared for the King's entrance more attractive, introduced the real and imaginary line of Scottish monarchs from Fergus I. welcoming Charles to the throne of his ancestors. These rude and hasty works, having fulfilled their purpose, were probably thrown aside with the other lumber of the pageant. The notice of a king, and such a judge, too, as Charles, must have been favourable to the fortunes of the painter; it is even said to have given new vigour and purity to his style: "his best works," says one of his biographers, "were from thence to his death." Having obtained the sanction of the chief authority at that time in art, he wrought with confidence,—and the confidence of genius inspired his drawing, and gave a freer glow to his colouring.

Though the town of Aberdeen offended him not a little, by offering for his portrait of Charles a price so unworthy, that he made haste to dispose of it to a stranger, his country, on the whole, was not illiberal; nay, in Aberdeen itself, though the corporation acted so penuriously to Jamesone, he had always kind friends; and heads of various of his fellow-citizens, yet remembered for their worth and talents, appear in the list of his portraits. Of these the most distinguished are, Dr. Dun, founder of the

grammar school—Andrew Cant—Sir Paul Menzies, Provost—Patrick Forbes, Bishop of Aberdeen—Professor Sandilands of King's College—Alexander Bannerman of Elsick—and David Anderson, merchant and burgess, who, from his eminent skill in mechanics, was commonly called "Davie-do-a'things." This latter person was Jamesone's uncle; and though he had three daughters, his widow was rich enough and generous enough to found and endow an hospital for the maintenance and education of ten poor orphans. Most of these portraits are in the University of Aberdeen, others in the city—where the name of Jamesone is held in reverence from the twofold consideration of his professional eminence, and the great respectability of his numerous descendants.

The ancient house of Marr afforded a liberal patronage to the painter: a round dozen of the Erskine name, and more, are enumerated in the Alva collection, besides those in other houses of the nobility allied to the old stock. Civil war, the sword, and forfeitures, crushed in one fatal year the noble house of Marr, and dispersed these and other fine pictures: they passed chiefly into the possession of the late Lord Alva and the Earl of Buchan.

Most of the noble families of Scotland have works from his hand; but the greatest collection of them is at Taymouth, in former days called Balloch, the seat of the Earl of Breadalbane. These were painted for Sir Colin Campbell of Glenorchy, a favourite with James VI., and not less so with Anne of Denmark, who, after her succession to the English throne, repeatedly invited the northern knight to her court; and sent him, as a token of her innocent esteem, a gold ring set with diamonds, and ornamented with a pair of doves exquisitely wrought. With this accomplished cavalier, Jamesone, it is said, travelled abroad; no time, however, is mentioned, and no country named. It was probably before his return from the school of Rubens: men seldom travel for knowledge in their old age; and if Sir Colin Campbell had become a favourite with the Queen before her accession to the English throne, he must have been advanced in life when the painter, in 1635, began his great labours at Taymouth. He commenced with a genea-

logical picture—a family tree, on whose wide-spreading branches the chiefs of the house of Campbell are hanging in miniature as numerous as fruit;[1]—and proceeded to execute, in the size of life, a series of portraits, which few great houses in the island can match; and which has preserved to us the looks and lineaments of many whose names belong to history: *e.g.* Sir Duncan Campbell—William Earl of Airth—John Duke of Rothes—James Marquis of Hamilton—Archibald Lord Napier—William Earl Marischal—The Earl of Loudon, Chancellor—John Earl of Marr, &c. All these portraits are in tolerable preservation; and when the colours were fresh, and men surveyed them who had not been rendered too fastidious by the grand dashing freedom of posture and magical colouring of Vandykes and Reynoldses, it is no wonder their fame was great. It must, indeed, be acknowledged that they are deficient in that fine flexibility of outline, and also in that deep splendour of colouring, which distinguish the best works of art; and were it not settled to a certainty that he studied under Rubens, I confess I should have set it down that he had taken Hans Holbein, or some of the old religious limners, for his models. He painted in a way so slight and so thin, that few of his pictures have been able to resist the terrible purification of sand, soap, and hard brushes, which family portraits used in former times to receive periodically from the hard hands of the northern housemaids. It appears from the memorandum book of Taymouth that Jamesone had in fact only thirty-

[1] A vellum manuscript, containing the genealogy of the house of Glenorchy, furnishes various memoranda respecting the works of the painter: for example—

"Item—the said Sir Coline Campbell, 8th laird of Glenorchy, gave unto George Jamesone painter in Edinburgh, for King Robert and King David Bruyses, kings of Scotland, and Charles 1st, King of Great Brittane, France, and Ireland, and his Majesty's queen, and for nine more of the queens of Scotland, their portraits, quhilk are set up in the hall of Balloch, the sum of two hundreth threescore pounds.

"Mair, the said Sir Coline gave to the said George Jamesone, for the knight of Lochowe's lady, and the first countess of Argyle, and six of the ladys of Glenorchy their portraits, and the said Sir Coline his own portrait, quhilk are set up in the Chalmer of Deass of Balloch. ane hundreth fourscore pounds," &c.

three shillings and fourpence per portrait: the prices, however, being entered in the currency of Scotland, sound large to those who happen to have forgot that, though one Scotch pint is equal to four pints English, *a pund Scots* was but twenty-pence sterling!

The civil wars, which followed the ill-advised interference of Charles with the discipline of the kirk, must have been most unfavourable to the painter's pursuits; nevertheless, the pictures which he painted of public men, even while the armies were mustering and the sword half-drawn, are numerous; and among them we find not a few of the leading spirits of the times:—as, for instance, James Grahame, the great Marquis of Montrose—his conqueror old David Leslie, the first Earl of Leven—Sir Adam Gordon—Crichton Viscount Frendraught—Sir Thomas Hope, Lord Advocate, founder of the noble house of Hopetown—the Earl of Tweedale—Sir Alexander Frazer—William Forbes, Bishop of Edinburgh—Sir Thomas Nicholson, Lord Advocate—the Earl of Huntly. Many characters of inferior importance may be added; some of whom lived in earlier and less turbulent times, and others witnessed the long and unbrotherly struggle of those heavy days:—George Heriot, the worthy goldsmith—Dr. Arthur Johnston, the poet—two Earls of Argyle—various portraits of the Carnegies, the Torphichens, the Gordons, the Lyons of Strathmore, the Urquharts, the Forbeses, and the Sutherlands. There are also a full-length portrait of James VI., which some judges suppose to have been painted from the life, and two of Charles I., and his Queen, of whose originality there is hardly a doubt. These pictures are now scattered widely through Scotland, and are generally in the keeping of persons who appreciate their value.

Jamesone occasionally painted family pieces,—a kind of composition which seems rarely to catch public attention, but which, nevertheless, in skilful hands, is capable of raising the character of mere portraiture into something approaching the historic. "Mr. Baird of Auchmeddan, in Aberdeenshire," says Walpole, "has in one piece three young ladies, cousins of the houses of Argyle, Errol, and Kinnoul; their ages six, seven and eight, as marked on

the side of the picture. At Mr. Lindsay's, of Wormistown in Fife, is a double half-length of two boys of that family, playing with a dog; their ages five and three, 1636." A picture containing three young girls of the Haddington family is in the possession of Sir John Dalrymple. One of the most remarkable of Jamesone's works is that likeness of himself in Cullen House,—a quarter length, as large as the life, with the hat on, according to his usual fashion. It is thus described in a letter to Sir John Sinclair:—"The picture has a large foreground, divided into squares of about six inches, of which there are ten; and in each, the figure of a man or woman, some of them full lengths, others half lengths, and some of them quarter lengths. The painter is looking you in the face, and with his left hand on a table, his right hand over it, with the forefinger of which he is pointing to three small figures, which are said to represent the best of his paintings. He is drawn in a black jacket, with the neck of his shirt, or a white band, turned over the collar of it; he has his pallet in his left hand, which rests on the table. The picture within the frame is two feet eight inches high. I am much afraid this description will convey a very imperfect idea of so fine a painting." Neither Walpole nor Pennant—the first an anxious inquirer, and the latter a visitor at Cullen House, and incessant in his search after works of art—make mention of this singular picture, nor do they allude to the painting of Charles and his disordered regalia.[1]

[1] Of the taste of those two eminent antiquaries, one of their sarcastic brethren thus writes:—"In Scotland there are two portraits by Vandyke, the most beautiful of his performances that I ever saw, and I have seen all the best in England. One is of the Marquis of Huntly, beheaded by the Covenanters, at Drummond Castle—*perfect;* only the background was retouched by Martin in my remembrance; the other is of Lord Warwick, at Taymouth—*perfection* too; but the hands are gloved, which renders it inferior to the other. Pennant was such a goose, that hearing of an excellent Vandyke at Taymouth, he mistook Lord Holland's portrait for that of his brother, and wrote a high-flown eulogium on a bad copy. This reminds me of Lord Orford; he mentions somewhere two excellent portraits by Holbein, in the Chapter House of Christ's Church, Oxford; they were my intimates for many years—and such daubs! This slip, and the villanous designs he collected for his historical work, convince me that he knew little of painting."

Jamesone had probably too much sense to meddle in the angry politics of his time; and he seems to have been befriended equally by both sides: the covenanting Lesleys and Campbells were his frequent visitors; while the royalist Montrose, and a vast body of his companions, not to mention the unfortunate monarch himself, were his friends and patrons. The pencil he held was, no doubt, a potent charm to keep peace about his dwelling: to sit to the great portrait-painter of the day is a temptation which many ridicule, but few resist. Jamesone was, in short, caressed by the powerful, and lauded by the poets of his time (Arthur Johnston especially), much in the usual fashion of his successful brethren before and since.

General favourite as he was, he appears to have in some degree relinquished the pencil after the commencement of the great civil war, and to have lived quietly in the bosom of his family until 1644, when he died at Edinburgh in the fifty-eighth year of his age, and was buried in the churchyard of the Gray Friars' Kirk. It was little the fashion of those fanatical years to erect monuments in memory of mere men, whether eminent or otherwise; his grave was, therefore, left undistinguished. A Latin elegy, composed on his death, by David Wedderburne, was, however, printed and circulated; and it extols his private virtues quite as warmly as his professional eminence.

"By his will," says Walpole, "written with his own hand, in July, 1641, and breathing a spirit of much piety and benevolence, he provides kindly for his wife and children, and leaves many legacies to his relations and friends; particularly, to Lord Rothes, the King's picture, from head to foot, and Mary with Martha in one piece. To William Murray he gives the medals in his coffer, and bestows liberally on the poor. That he should be in a condition to do all this seems extraordinary, his prices having been so moderate: for, enumerating the debts due to him, he charges Lady Haddington for a whole-length of her husband, and Lady Seton's of the same dimensions, frames and all, but three hundred marks; and Lord Maxwell, for his own picture and his lady's, to their knees,

one hundred marks; both sums of Scots money." The prices which Jamesone received for his works were, indeed, low; but we are not certain that he amassed all the fortune which he so benevolently disposed of by labouring at the easel: his connections were numerous, respectable, and rich: in his youth, he bore the expense of foreign travel, and foreign study, and he likewise endeavoured to establish himself in the unprofitable line of history, before he was forced into portraiture by the public taste.

Of the personal manners of Jamesone, we have very scanty information. He has been called vain, because he often painted his own portrait, and ever with his hat on: but it should be remembered, that this wearing of the hat was the practice of his great master, Rubens; and that when his portrait was commissioned by a customer, it became a duty to paint it. It was also, perhaps, in imitation of Rubens, that he usually introduced the portrait of his wife with that of his son and himself: Isabel Tosh was a comely woman, and the artist no doubt was vain of her good looks. His disposition appears to have been amiable: he painted many portraits for fame or for friendship alone, and bequeathed some of his most valuable works to the noblemen who had patronized him; thus at once repaying them for their kindness, and securing for his productions galleries worthy of their merit. He is always spoken of as a good presbyterian; but he left a natural daughter behind him; and in his last will, notwithstanding the feeling of the times, he seems to have made no distinction between her and his lawful daughter. This latter lady, Mary Jamesone, married, first, Mr. Burnet of Aldricke, in the county of Aberdeen; secondly, James Gregory, an eminent mathematician, and ancestor of the Gregorys of Edinburgh, so distinguished in the history of medicine and of literature: thirdly, George Eddie, citizen and bailie, Aberdeen; and in all of these alliances she had children. She inherited no small portion of her father's genius in art, and dedicated it to devout purposes. She wrought several Scripture pieces in tapestry, and hung them in the High Church of Aberdeen. One of her descendants, John Alexander, obtained some reputation in art: he was

educated in Italy; returned to Scotland in 1720; painted several historical pictures at Castle Gordon, and delighted to copy or invent portraits of Mary Queen of Scots. Many families in the North, distinguished for talent and respectability, still take pride in tracing their lineage to Jamesone.

In his hours of study, or his modes of labour, who shall instruct us? He painted commonly on a grey canvas; his full-length portraits were usually a slight degree less than the life: his earliest works are sometimes on board, and sometimes on cloth smoothly primed with a proper tone to help the harmony of his shadows. "He was one of the most esteemed," says Walpole, "of Rubens' scholars; and painted in the broad, thin, transparent manner. His excellence consists in delicacy and softness, with a clear and beautiful colouring; his shades not charged, but helped by varnish, with little appearance of the pencil. He had much of Vandyke's second manner; and to Sir Antony some of his works have been occasionally imputed." This is high praise; but when we consider the state of British art in his day, and especially the unskilfulness of the native professors, it can scarcely be considered as extravagant. To depart at once from the formal corpse-like system of making figures, and assert the grace of form and the colouring of nature, required boldness as well as genius; and there can be no question that Jamesone did all this. It may gratify certain sorts of critics, to dwell on the undoubted facts, that a certain hardness of manner is visible even in the happiest of his works; that his portraits are often of a severe aspect, with a touch too much of the vinegar of the times in them; and that he has reached but seldom the perfect ease and happy gracefulness of nature. His outlines are correct, his colouring lucid, and his proportions just; and he was the first native of our island who refused to limit himself to miniatures, like Hilliard and Oliver, and transferred life of the natural dimensions to his canvas. That he stands at the head of the British school of portrait painting there can, therefore, be no question; nor had England an artist of her own worthy of being named above him in his own

walk before the days of Reynolds.[1] When we consider the circumstances of the painter, and his times,—his want of instructors and models, and the various difficulties which the fanatical prejudices of that dark age must have presented to any cultivator of the graceful arts,—it is impossible not to admit that Scotland has all reason to be proud of George Jamesone.[2]

[1] It has before been pointed out that Cunningham quite ignores William Dobson. See Introduction, vol. i. page 32.—Ed.

[2] For whatever may be considered as interesting in art, or curious in research, in this memoir, I am indebted to the kindness of my friend, Mr. David Laing, of Edinburgh, the well-known bookseller and accomplished antiquarian.

RAMSAY.

ALLAN RAMSAY, principal painter to George III., was the son of Allan Ramsay the poet, and Christian Ross his wife, and born at Edinburgh, in the year 1713, the eldest of seven children. His descent from the noble family of Dalhousie is clear and undisputed: it was claimed in verse by his father, and admitted by the contemporary Earl, who thought it to his honour that the restorer of Scottish national poetry was of the family tree. The author of the "Gentle Shepherd" was, in fact, the great grandson of the laird of Cockpen, a younger brother of that old house.

Of the painter's early years we have but a brief account. He began to sketch at twelve: Edwards, in his anecdotes, says he was "rather self-taught." The first notice we have of him is in a letter from his father to Smibert the painter, in 1736, when the artist was twenty-three years old. "My son Allan has been pursuing his science since he was a dozen years auld; was with Mr. Hyssing in London for some time, about two years ago;[1] has since been painting here like a Raphael; sets out for the seat of the Beast beyond the Alps within a month hence, to be away two years. I'm sweer[2] to part with him, but canna stem the current which flows from the advice of his patrons, and his own inclination." The patronage withheld from the father

[1] Hans Huzssing, according to Walpole, was an artist of Stockholm, who came over to England in 1700, and lived many years with Dahl, whose manner he imitated. He painted the three Princesses, daughters of the King, in the robes they wore at the Coronation. It is possible that Ramsay may have studied for a short time under this Swedish artist; but he came to London when he was about twenty years of age, and entered at once as a student at the St. Martin's Lane Academy.—Ed.

[2] *Sweer*, i.e. *loath*.

was, in a fit of repentance, bestowed on the son. He left Edinburgh for Rome, in June, 1736;[1] there he studied three years, chiefly under Solimane and Imperiale, two artists of much celebrity in their day; he then returned with whatever he had learned to Scotland; painted the

[1] His travelling companion in his tour through France and Italy was a certain Dr. Cunningham, a physician of Edinburgh, who, upon his brother's death, succeeded to a baronetage, and took the name of Dick. The journal kept by this worthy was published in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1853, and contains many adventures in which our painter bore part. In particular there is a graphic account of a shipwreck which the two friends experienced on the coast of Leghorn, and which very nearly cost them their lives. Allan Ramsay, it appears, who was a good swimmer, hoped to save himself in this way, but Dr. Cunningham, who could not swim, courageously resigned himself to his fate.

"For myself," he says, "I reckoned on certain death; but before I gave all up, I thought it best to examine what wine we had yet remaining, and having got several flasks full, I instantly distributed them amongst our sailors, making them a short speech in Italian, repeating the word *animo! animo!* which is courage, courage, *mei fratelli*, my brethren, and particularly addressing myself to the padrone at the helm and the English sailor, who I conjured not to lose his heart, which he promised not to do as long as he could keep hold of it. I last addressed myself to Mr. Smith and his man Tom, desiring them not to lose hopes of meeting one another in a better place; and, lastly, I said what occurred to me in the most moving manner to my friend and dear travelling companion, Mr. Allan Ramsay: and I took out my gold watch and rings, to see if he could fasten them any way to his arms, and if he should escape anyhow by swimming and reach Britain again, that he would deliver the watch and ring to my much beloved young wife I had just married before I set out, with my prayers and imprecations for his safety, hoping, if he survived, he would always remember me, and that I had the strongest impressions on my mind that, if the worst should happen, we should certainly meet in a better place; that, as I could not swim, I could make no effort for my safety, and instantly covered myself up with an old sail as a winding sheet, and bidding them all farewell, and calling out *animo* to the sailors, most devoutly resigned myself over to my fate." Fortunately there was no need for this resignation. The wind after a time chopped round, and drove the little felucca in which the party were sailing violently on to the shore not far from Pisa. Every one got safely to land, and Dr. Cunningham and Ramsay passed the night quite comfortably in a fisherman's hut, where they found some Spanish soldiers who had also been shipwrecked on the same coast. The next morning they proceeded by land to Pisa. As a remarkable coincidence the journal writer further relates that old Allan Ramsay, the poet, had dreamed the very night of the shipwreck that his son was cast away on the coast of Italy, but was providentially saved.—Ed.

head of Duncan Forbes, and his own sister Janet Ramsay, both in New Hall, near Edinburgh; also an excellent portrait of Archibald Duke of Argyle, in his robes as Lord of Session, now in the Exchange, Glasgow; and finally removed to London. The exact time is unknown.

He found friends there of some value. The Earl of Bridgewater was one of his earliest patrons; and as the course of events brought him into power, Lord Bute took the lead, and introduced him to Frederick Prince of Wales, whose portrait he painted both in full length and in profile. But the work which brought him more immediately into notice, was a whole length of Bute himself: there was a calm representation of nature, without the mannered affectation of squareness which prevailed among his contemporaries; the posture was very elegant, and the legs so remarkably handsome, that Reynolds thought it necessary to exert himself more than usual in a full length which he had on his easel, saying, with a smile, "I wish to show legs with Ramsay's Lord Bute."

Ramsay's studies at Rome had not been confined to art: "he was smit," says Fuseli, "with the love of classic lore, and desired to trace on dubious vestiges the haunts of ancient genius and learning." For this task he was eminently qualified. He was a good Latin, French, and Italian scholar; and, indeed, had mastered most of the living languages of Europe, excepting the Russian; in his latter years, too, he studied Greek, and made such progress as entitled him to be called "a pretty scholar." His German he afterwards found of singular advantage to him at court. He was accused of being more anxious to be thought an accomplished scholar, and a man of fine understanding and taste, than a good painter—a profession for which he was said to have but a cold regard. "You will not find a man," said Dr. Johnson, who knew him well, "in whose conversation there is more instruction, more information, or more elegance, than in Ramsay's."

His admiration of the style of the great Italian masters brought upon him the wrath of Hogarth; and his now visible success in life, the satire of Churchill. The former desired to pun him down under the name of Ram's eye;

and, what was severer, satirized him, in the "Battle of the Pictures," in that long lot of old paintings impressed with the image and cross of St. Andrew; and Churchill, when he wrote the "Prophecy of Famine," coupled him with his father in these disparaging lines:—

> "Thence came the Ramsays, men of worthy note,
> Of whom one paints as well 's the other wrote."

But for the satire of either the painter or the poet he seems to have cared little personally, and his father's fame was such as could take care of itself; the "Gentle Shepherd" will most probably be heard of as a work of genius, as long at least as the best invectives of a tippling priest,

> "Alike debauched in body, soul, and song."

The feuds which in those days distracted the united commonwealths of letters and art may be traced in many a bitter verse, and satiric print, and sarcastic memorandum. Ramsay nevertheless prospered in his profession: his skill in art and his reputation for good sense and learning obtained him most extensive employment; his pencil was called to ceilings and to walls, as well as to portraits; and he had several workmen under him, who supplied bodies, where he painted heads. Nor did he confine himself exclusively to his studies: he made a second journey to Rome, where he stayed several months; another to Edinburgh, where he remained long enough to establish, in 1754, "The Select Society." He amassed money also; for when his father died in embarrassed circumstances, in 1757, he paid his debts, and settled a pension on his unmarried sister, Janet Ramsay, who survived to 1804. Indeed, I am informed, on the best authority, that before he had the luck to become a favourite with the King he was perfectly independent as to fortune, having, in one way or another, accumulated not less than forty thousand pounds.

With the accession of George III. came the golden days of Ramsay:—the great merit of Reynolds was but partially acknowledged, for, from some unexplained cause, the King neither liked him as a man, nor admired him as an

artist; the wind of court favour, therefore, filled Ramsay's sails, and he obtained distinction as the first, where he at best deserved notice as the second.[1] But this was not all: Shakelton, portrait-painter to the court, was, in 1767, removed from his place; and the tradition of the London studios is, that he broke his heart and died when he heard that Ramsay was appointed in his stead. This increase of honour brought increase of work: he was obliged to engage five assistants. Their names prove how much foreigners mingled with natives in the great manufacture of portraiture in those days:—1. Mrs. Black, a lady of less talent than good taste; 2. Vandycke, a Dutchman, allied more in name than talent with him of the days of Charles I.; 3. Eikhart, a German, well acquainted with draperies; 4. Roth, another German, who aided in the subordinate parts; and, 5. David, commonly called Davie Martin, a Scotchman, and the favourite chief draughtsman and helper. One Vesperies, a foreigner, was occasionally employed to paint fruits and flowers. Such was the desire to have a portrait by Ramsay, that he was fain to employ any body to aid in advancing his pictures. He invariably, however, painted the head with his own hand; at least it was not till his pupil Philip Reinagle began to distinguish himself, that he trusted anything of that order to the skill of others.

As his Majesty invariably presented portraits of himself and the Queen to all his ambassadors and governors of colonies, Ramsay had a busy time, manufacturing these

[1] The equable Reynolds, though perhaps secretly a little mortified, never showed any resentment at being thus passed over. He continued friendly with Ramsay until his death, and was accustomed to say of him "that he was a sensible man, though not a good painter."

It is strange to read contemporary criticism on the respective merits of these two artists, one of whom has achieved immortal fame. while the other is now almost forgotten.

Walpole, writing to Dalrymple about them in 1759, perceives nothing of this. He says, "Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Ramsay can scarce be rivals—their manners are so different. The former is bold, and has a kind of tempestuous colouring, yet with dignity and grace; the latter is all delicacy. *Mr. Reynolds seldom succeeds with women;* Mr. Ramsay is formed to paint them!" This is the judgment of the great art critic of his day.—Ed.

royal effigies.[1] The King sat for his coronation portrait, as it was called, in Buckingham Palace. In this piece he appeared in his royal robes; and in the like costume were all the succeeding pictures painted. It often happened that the King desired the painter to convey his easel and canvas to the dining-room, that he might observe his progress, and have the pleasure of his conversation. The painter, a bold, spirited, well-informed man, perfectly conversant with the state of the various kingdoms of Europe, spoke freely and without disguise; and as he was the only person about the court, save the domestics, who could speak German, the Queen more especially found it an agreeable variety to chat with him in her native language. Ramsay, in short, was a great favourite. When the King had finished his usual allowance of boiled mutton and turnips, he would rise and say, "Now, Ramsay, sit down in my place, and take your dinner." This partiality produced, of course, abundance of enemies; but they could do him no harm, for he was not dependent upon royal favour, and the extent of his fortune was, at least, as well known, and as sincerely envied, as either his accomplishments or his courtly success. He had many high friends: Lord Bute, the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Bath, Lord Chesterfield, and the Duke of Richmond in particular, were frequently at his house, and that more, it was said, on matters connected with politics than painting. Ramsay loved and enjoyed this, for politics were his delight; he

[1] This wearisome manufacture of royal portraits called forth the following verses from Peter Pindar:

"I've heard that Ramsay, when he died,
Left just nine rooms well stuff'd with Queens and Kings,
From whence all nations might have been supplied
That long'd for *valuable things*.
Viceroys, ambassadors, and plenipos,
Bought them to join their raree-shows
In foreign parts,
And show the progress of the British Isles,
Whether they purchased by the pound or yard
I cannot tell, because I never heard;
But this I know—his shop was like a fair,
And dealt most largely in this Royal ware."—ED.

wrote with great vigour and facility, and dipped his pen freely in the public controversies of those times. He was known to be the author of many ingenious pieces on history, politics, and criticism, signed "Investigator," and since collected into a volume. He acquired credit by a pamphlet on the subject of Elizabeth Canning, which had the merit of opening the eyes of the nation to the real truth of that mysterious story. He corresponded, too, with Voltaire and Rousseau; both of whom he had visited when abroad; and his letters are said to have been elegant and witty. Ramsay, in short, led the life of an elegant, accomplished man of the world, and public favourite; the companion of the first of his day, and the admitted ornament of the highest societies.

When he was busy with his first portrait of Queen Charlotte all the crown jewels and the regalia, too, were sent to him: the painter said such a mass of jewels and gold deserved a guard, and sentinels were accordingly posted day and night in front and rear of his house. His residence was in Harley Street, on the west side, just above the Mews; and his studio consisted of a set of coachmen's rooms and haylofts gutted, all thrown into one long gallery.

Soon after his appointment to be King's painter he made a third excursion to Rome, accompanied by his son, who has since risen to distinction in the army; and here, we are told, his chief pleasure lay in examining and copying the ancient Greek and Latin inscriptions in the corridors of the Vatican. This kind of employment, it seems, he loved infinitely better than his professional labours: he had, however, enough of the artist, and the Briton, too, about him, to be much annoyed when he found the genius of his country questioned. The President of the Roman Academy, desirous of doing all honour to the King of Great Britain's painter, showed him the School of Art, and all the drawings of the students: but was rash enough to drop a hint that England had nothing of the kind that could compare with what he was exhibiting. Ramsay kindled up at this, and said, "Well, sir, I will show you how we draw in England." He instantly wrote to Davie

Martin, desiring him to put his drawings into his trunk, and bring them to Rome. On the arrival of Davie, his master arranged all his drawings in due order, and then called in the President and his scholars. Ramsay always declared this to be the proudest day of his life: "for," said he, "the Italians were confounded and overcome, and British skill triumphant." That he believed in his victory there can be no doubt: but we know not what the Italian artists said of it. Rome at that time had few skilful hands, but in drawing she has generally excelled; her deficiency is in sentiment and in colour. Ramsay indulged his champion with a month's look at the wonders of the eternal city, and then sent him home to spread the news of this perhaps unlooked-for victory.

Ramsay himself presently returned to England, and resumed his flourishing practice, until an unfortunate accident befell him, which made him lay down his brush for the rest of his life. Reading of a fire in which lives were lost, he was so touched by the calamity, that he rose and desired all his household and pupils to follow him, and he would show the way how they might make their escape, even though, as in the story he had been perusing, all the lower part of the premises were on fire. He pushed a ladder through the loft door, desired them all to watch what he did, went quickly up, and said, "Now I am safe, I can escape along the roofs of the adjoining houses." As he turned to come down again he missed the step, fell, and dislocated his right arm in so severe a way that it never fairly recovered.

Happening at the time to be occupied with a portrait of the King for the Excise Office, he held up his right arm with his left, and so finished the work; and, what is remarkable, it was said, both by himself and others, to be the finest portrait he ever painted.

This momentary effort speaks much for the spirit of the man: but his constitution had been sorely shattered; and finding himself in a disabled state, he resolved to try once more the vivifying air of Italy. Philip Reinagle had now become skilful in the art; and Ramsay, leaving his brush in his pupil's hand, gave him an order to complete, during

his own absence, fifty pairs of kings and queens at ten guineas each. Accompanied by his son, he set off from London; but his shoulder continued painful; sleepless nights more and more shook his frame: and his early alacrity of spirit was gone. He reached Rome, however, in safety, and established himself once more among the scenes most dear to his fancy. Meanwhile, the copying of kings and queens began to weary Reinagle; and he wrote to Ramsay, that ten guineas was not price sufficient. Ramsay augmented it to thirty; still this did not render the task less irksome: Reinagle manufactured the article according to contract; but the dose of portraiture was so strong, that when, after the toil of six years, he completed his undertaking, he never could think of that department again without a sort of horror.[1] His imitation of Ramsay's style had by this time become so perfect, that the work of the pupil could not be distinguished from that of the master.

Ramsay continued to reside in Italy several years, and maintained a correspondence with some of the first men of his day both in France and England. His health, however, never was thoroughly restored; and by degrees that love of home came upon him, which, it is said, comes upon all. In the summer of 1784 he departed for his native land, which he expected to gain by short and easy stages. He reached Paris with difficulty: the motion of

[1] Philip Reinagle, R.A., as is well known, turned afterwards to animal and landscape painting, which he practised with even greater success than portrait. This wearying manufacture of royal effigies for Ramsay appears indeed to have given Reinagle an utter distaste for "limning" the human face, for, whereas up to 1785 his contributions to the Academy had consisted solely of portraits, after that date we scarcely find one by his hand. He is now chiefly known by his pictures of dogs, and his hunting pieces; but his landscapes, in which he imitated the Dutch masters, are also occasionally met with. He was elected a member of the Academy in 1812, and died in 1833 in the eighty-fifth year of his age. Redgrave states that many of his copies of Dutch pictures "pass for fine originals in good collections." His son, Richard Ramsay Reinagle, to whom Cunningham acknowledges he was indebted for much of the information of this memoir, was also a painter of some note; a member of the Academy and of the Old Water Colour Society. He died in 1862.—Ed.

the carriage had brought on a slow fever, which medicine failed to remove, and he died in August, in the seventy-first year of his age.[1]

Ramsay was middle-sized, well made, and finely proportioned, and his looks were acute and intelligent. He was hasty and irritable, passionate and headstrong, but easily smoothed down and pacified; a stedfast friend, and a most agreeable companion. In extent of learning and variety of knowledge he surpassed all artists of his time; and was considered an ornament to the Royal Academy, not so much as a portrait-painter—though even in that he was second only to Reynolds—as for the accomplishments of a gentleman and scholar, his taste in poetry as well as in art, and his not inconsiderable powers as a writer. He was fond of delicate eating, and was as determined a consumer of tea as Dr. Johnson himself, but had no relish for stronger potations: it is said, that even the smell of a bottle of claret was too much for him.

In his own art we may, perhaps, trace something of the same rather effeminate turn. His execution was neat, careful, and finished; but the freedom of his pencilling never reached the character of boldness: the placid and contemplative were his element,—energy he never even attempted; and his colouring seldom deserted the regions of the pale and the grey. Walpole has recorded his belief, that if he did not achieve a first-rate name, it was for want of subjects rather than of genius; and I shall conclude with the more detailed opinion of Northcote, in his lately-published "Conversations:"—"There was Ramsay, of whom Sir Joshua used to say, that he was the most sensible among all the painters of his time, but he has left little to show it. His manner was dry and timid. He stopped short in the middle of his work, because he knew exactly how much it wanted. Now and then we find tints and sketches, which show what he might have been if his hand had been equal to his conceptions. I have seen a picture of his of the Queen soon after she was married: a

[1] He died on the 10th of August, 1784, a few days after reaching Dover.—Ed.

profile, and slightly done, but it was a paragon of elegance. She had a fan in her hand;—Lord, how she held that fan! It was weak in execution, and ordinary in features, but the farthest possible removed from anything like vulgarity. A professor might despise it; but in the mental part I have never seen anything of Vandyke's equal to it. I should find it difficult to produce anything of Sir Joshua's that conveys an idea of more grace and delicacy."[1]

[1] For the most characteristic parts of this memoir I am indebted to the kindness of Richard Ramsay Reinagle, Esq., R.A.

ROMNEY.

GEORGE ROMNEY, in the opinion of Flaxman, the first of all our painters, for poetic dignity of conception, was born at Beckside, near Dalton, in Lancashire, on the 15th of December, 1734.[1] His ancestors, yeomen of good repute, lived till the stormy times of the Commonwealth near Appleby, in Westmoreland; when the civil tumults compelled his grandfather, as yet a young man, to seek refuge in the county of Lancaster. He married there at the mature age of sixty; but such were his temperate habits and the excellence of his constitution, that he lived to see his children's children. John, one of his sons, was taught the united trades of carpenter, joiner, and cabinet-maker. Subdivisions of labour prevailed less then than now; and though something of a dreamer in curious projects and expensive plans, he acquired considerable wealth, and, what was better, such reputation for worth and fair dealing, that his neighbours called him "Honest John Romney." He took to wife Ann Simpson of Sladebank, in Cumberland, a clever and frugal woman, who loved to set her house in good order, and see her children brought up in piety and knowledge. Of sons they had at least four;[2] viz. William, who died when about to depart to the West Indies; James, who rose to the rank of Colonel in the service of the East India Company; Peter, who gave such proofs of genius in art as made his early death very deeply regretted; and GEORGE, who acquired such fame in painting, as, at this day, renders his story a matter of national interest.

[1] Hayley says on the 26th of December.—ED.

[2] It appears by the Parish Register that John Romney was married in 1730, and had one daughter and nine sons besides our artist. From some reason the baptism of George was not inserted in the Parish Register.—*History of Furness*.—ED.

Of all our eminent artists Romney has perhaps been the most fortunate in his biographers.[1] Reynolds squandered his wines, his portraits, and, finally, his fortune, on men of skill and genius; yet none of them wrote a word worthy of him when he was gone. Romney moved among persons of less literary eminence, yet his character as a man and his talents as a painter have been more cleverly as well as cordially dealt by. Cumberland the dramatist penned a short but able memoir, soon after the death of the artist; Hayley the poet next put forth an elaborate life, accompanied with engravings and epistles in verse; and lately the painter's son, the Reverend John Romney, has published an account more interesting than either. Of these works it may be safely said, that the first[2] is imperfect and unsatisfactory; that the second, though diffuse in its details, is not very correct; and that the third, with all its merits, has too much of the tenderness of the son to be so particular as could be wished as to personal and domestic matters. If it be thought that I treat the names of the poet and the dramatist with less ceremony than their fame deserves, I answer, that I have but adopted, from feeling their accuracy, opinions already expressed. "The wish of a deceased friend," says Hayley, "whose professional merit was eminent, would be alone sufficient to animate a biographer; but I have an additional motive to prepare a life of Romney: a memorial of my friend has appeared, which I could not peruse without feelings of indignation; for though it bears the signature of an author of great and of deserved celebrity, it is in truth a coarse misrepresentation of the man whose memory it is my duty and my delight to defend, as far as justice can allow me to proceed in his defence." No doubt Hayley imagined that the life which he composed would extinguish that of the dramatist; and as he had collected much of his information from the painter's own lips, and undertaken the task at his own "affectionate desire," the world were disposed to be satisfied with his performance. The life of Romney, by his son, has, however,

[1] If it is fortunate to have eulogists and apologists rather than impartial critics for biographers.—Ed.

[2] Published in the "European Magazine" in 1803.—Ed.

thrown doubt and suspicion upon that written by the poet. These are the reverend biographer's words:—"He saw, with mortification, that all the accounts which had been given of Romney and his works were either defective, false, or injurious: his scruples arising from diffidence soon yielded to a more powerful impulse; and he should have deemed himself guilty of very culpable indifference if he had not endeavoured to dispel the malignant cloud that hangs over his father's memory, and to place his character in its true light." To place his character as a man and a painter in its true light, is also the wish of the present writer; and he will endeavour to avail himself of the labours of all his predecessors.

It is much the fashion in the north country, among people of substance, to give the eldest son of the family a fine education, in order that the paternal name may be maintained with honour in the land, while the junior branches are less carefully dealt by: and the humbler orders have mimicked the example. It is not unusual to see the younger sons of our farmers or peasants holding the plough or watching the sheep, while the elder-born are in the church, the army, or the law. Something like this happened in the family of John Romney. William, the eldest, was instructed in classics, in which he excelled: "but George," says his son, "not making much progress in school learning, and being moreover of a sedate and steady disposition, was taken from school in his eleventh year, to be employed at home, where his services were wanted."—"Having discovered," says Hayley, "soon after he had attained the age of twelve years, a great passion for mechanics, he employed himself in a variety of devices, particularly in carving small figures in wood, to which he was led by the ardour of early uninstructed genius. He was enthusiastically fond of music, and passed much time in experiments to make violins of various shapes and powers. In advanced life he took great delight in recollecting the ingenious industry that he exerted as a boy. He carefully preserved the favourite violin of his own construction; and has been heard to play upon it in the house which he filled with the productions of his pencil." This skill in the

carving of wood, and the construction of fiddles, speaks, however, of a more intimate acquaintance with the hand-saw and the plane than Mr. Hayley seems willing to acknowledge; and on this head Flaxman gives direct evidence:—"Romney (says he) was brought up to the business of a cabinet-maker:—and this employment, which to a common observer would seem little better than an ingenious mechanical drudgery, led his inquisitive mind to contemplate the principles of mathematical science, and to acquaint himself with the elements of architecture." There were, however, other pursuits, and of a curious kind, in which he was presently deep.

There lived at that time in Dalton one Williamson, a watchmaker, a singular enthusiast. He was fond of music, an admirable performer on the violin, skilful in the uses of the camera obscura, not unacquainted with drawing, and above all, a professor of the exploded science of alchemy—a love of which, after being expelled from London, lingered late, here and there, in the provinces. Young Romney was this man's almost constant companion; with him he fiddled, planned, drew, and moreover dipped into the mysterious science of the transmutation of metals. Nor were they idle dreamers, who only sat and amused themselves with strange imaginings; they had a furnace and crucibles, if not all the apparatus with which tradition or history sets up the alchemist:—

> "Your stone, your medicine, and your chrysospherma,
> Your sal, your sulphur, and your mercury,
> Your oil of height, your tree of life, your blood,
> Your toad, your crow, your dragon, and your panther,
> Your sun, your moon, your firmament, your adrop."

Time, labour, and money, were expended in such pursuits, and preparations were made for one grand and crowning experiment which was expected to end in a shower of gold. As the hour drew nigh, the anxiety of the alchemist increased; the fire which had been kept burning for nine months, showed flame of a promising colour—the contents of the crucibles assumed a yellowish hue—and the projector saw in imagination riches rivalling the dreams of Sir Epi-

cure Mammon. It seems his wife, on that fated day, was entertaining a select coterie of gossips; and knowing that workers in fire loved to taste the cup, summoned her husband to make merry. Romney, in relating the story said, "Now Williamson in vain represented that the moment of fate was at hand; his wife's entreaties or remonstrances prevailed; and as he took his seat and drank, his furnace, with all that it contained, blew up." His wife was in consternation. "Never was conjugal complaisance more unfortunate," says Hayley, "save in the case of our first parents." He hastened to his study; on looking at the scene of ruin, one of his companions comforted him with words like those of Face in Ben Jonson—

> "O, sir, we are defeated! all the works
> Are flown in fumo, every glass is burst,
> Furnace, and all rent down! as if a bolt
> Of thunder had been driven through the house;
> Retorts, receivers, pelicans, bolt-heads,
> All struck in shivers."

Romney was ready with his sympathy. The alchemist, however, refused to be comforted; and his rage went a bitter length. He conceived a permanent hatred against his wife—left his home—forsook her for ever, and associated with another woman:—"an evil example," says Hayley, with ludicrous affectation, "which was *not without its influence on Romney* in a future day."

The story of Williamson made, however, a strong impression on Romney's fancy. In his declining years he amused himself with the idea of sketching a melodrama, "representing," says his son, "the progress of an alchemist in quest of the philosopher's stone. The sanguine expectations of the philosopher were to have been heightened in every scene: but as he approached the crisis of the discovery, and was about to reap the golden recompense of all his toils, an ill-timed and prying curiosity in his wife, ignorant of his sublime pursuits, made frustrate, by one single interdicted act, the consecutive experiments of years. A tremendous explosion then took place; the devil himself appeared; but instead of gold, there remained nothing but broken crucibles; and all those glittering visions which

had so long figured in his imagination vanished at once in smoke." Such a succession of dramatic scenes is much too complicated for the pencil. A story which enchains, when related or written, may, nevertheless, want those picturesque points so necessary in a painting. The keenest wit and the rarest humour often have nothing in common with shape or with form, and may be compared to sounds, which can be described but not drawn.

How and at what period the love of art came upon Romney has not been clearly shown. Cumberland asserts that it was inspired by the cuts in the "Universal Magazine." Hayley, who probably had the story from the painter, says, that he consumed the time of his fellow-workmen in sketching them in various attitudes: while the artist's son states, that Da Vinci's "Treatise on Painting," illustrated by many fine engravings, was early in his hands. All these stories may be true: genius draws its materials from many sources. The sight of a few fine prints in an obscure village in Yorkshire awakened the spark in Stothard: the carved figures in an old picture-frame did as much for Chantrey; and Wilkie's sense of the mingled comic and serious was first shown in drawing the head of one of his school-fellows, who sat to learn his neglected lesson on that bad eminence, the stool of shame. Romney himself used to relate, that one day in church he saw a man with a most singular face, from which he could never take his eye: he spoke of it when he went home, and his parents desired him to describe the man. He took a pencil, and from memory delineated the face so skilfully, and with such strength of resemblance, that they immediately named the person he meant; and the boy was so pleased with this, that he began to draw with more serious application.

Cumberland, with some boldness, describes the artist as "a child of nature, who had never seen or heard anything that could elicit his genius or urge him to emulation, and who became a painter without a prototype." His genius, indeed, was the gift of nature; but his skill of hand and his knowledge of colours had to be obtained at the common price—study and application.

A regular instructor came in the hour of need: this was an eccentric young painter, whose love of fine dress, and loftiness of carriage, obtained for him among the peasantry of the north the title of *Count* Steele. This person had derived some knowledge from one Wright, a painter of shipping in Liverpool; and had moreover studied for a year in Paris; and making his appearance in Lancashire as a painter of domestic pictures, attracted some notice. It happened that Romney had at this period not only covered many deals and boards in the shop with sketches of his fellow-workmen, but had ventured further, and made a drawing of Mrs. Gardiner, a lady of some taste and discernment, who on seeing his performance commended him much, and encouraged him to proceed. All this was represented to his father, and something like a consultation was held, when it was resolved that he should be placed under a regular practitioner; and as Steele was then at Kendal, and wanted a pupil, it was determined to place him in his studio. To Steele Romney was accordingly conducted, and at the age of nineteen, bound apprentice for four years, to learn "the art or science of painting, and to obey all lawful and reasonable commands." The premium was fixed at twenty pounds. Romney was not one of those fortunate men, who choose sagacious friends, or make happy engagements, in their youth. Williamson the alchemist, whom he continued to speak of with tears of admiration long after he had risen to fame, was at the best but a worthless vagabond; and Count Steele, though an artist of some talent, and no despicable dauber, as Cumberland represents him, had failings which proved ruinous to himself and injurious to his pupil. His love of dress involved him in debts which he could not easily discharge, and his love of idleness made matters worse—misrule was mistress of his household. Romney complained that he had to grind colours frequently which he was not allowed to use, and was made a drudge. He confessed, however, that he acquired considerable knowledge in the preparation and mixing of colours, through his own spirit of observation, as well as from his master's instruction, whose boast it was that he had studied chiaroscuro under Vanloo.

The master of Romney found by-and-bye that painting portraits at four guineas each was but a slow way of acquiring a fortune: he sought to mend his income by marriage: and his French airs and finery aided him in securing the affections of a young lady of some fortune, with whom he resolved to elope to Gretna Green. She was vigilantly guarded: nevertheless Count Steele, through the active agency of Romney, carried her triumphantly over the border, leaving his pupil to superintend the studio during the honeymoon. The extreme sensibility of Romney's nature is repeatedly alluded to by Hayley; and it is noteworthy, how many of the most important actions of his life, whether to his discredit or his honour, are traced by this sagacious friend to the same source. His extreme sensibility brought a fever upon him at the conclusion of the Count's elopement affair; and his extreme sensibility made him fall in love with a young woman, who attended him during his sickness. Of this wedding his friend the poet, and his own son, give accounts somewhat different. "The juvenile pupil, left desolate and sick in the lodgings of his distant master," says Hayley, "was attended by a young woman of the house, whom he described as a person of a compassionate character. The pity so natural to a female attendant on a young lonely invalid, and the gratitude of a lively convalescent, produced an event which can hardly surprise any person acquainted with human nature —a precipitate marriage. George Romney, the inexperienced apprentice to a painter himself of little experience, was married in Kendal, to Mary Abbott, of Kirkland, on the 14th day of October, 1756."—"He had a nice perception of what is beautiful in the forms of nature," says the Rev. John Romney, "an imagination that exaggerated its realities, and a quick susceptibility of impression from such objects as delighted his fancy: the consequence was, that he became enamoured of a young female, into whose society he had happened to be introduced soon after he came to Kendal. The object of his affection was in the same rank of life with himself, and respectably connected. She excelled more in symmetry of form than in regularity of features; yet in this latter particular she was far from

deficient. She had had the misfortune to lose her father when she was a child: her mother was, however, an amiable and prudent woman, and discharged her maternal duties ably; instilling into the minds of her two daughters the principles of morality and religion, and illustrating her precepts by her own correct example."

His precipitate marriage drew upon him the rebuke of his parents; and he vindicated himself with some firmness and skill. "If you consider everything deliberately," he wrote, "you will find it to be the best affair that ever happened to me: because, if I have fortune, I shall make a better painter than I should otherwise have done, as it will be a spur to my application; and my thoughts being now still, and not obstructed by youthful follies, I can practise with more diligence and success than ever." In fulfilment of his own maxims, he devoted himself to his art with the most resolute industry; his application was incessant: and having no other models to study from, save those of nature, he acquired a style peculiar to himself, which in his higher fortunes he modified, but never abandoned. To his wife, too, he was in those early days kind and indulgent; indeed, she seems to have been in every respect worthy of his affections: she supplied him secretly with money in his professional tours with Steele, conveying half a guinea at a time under the seal of her letter: and he rewarded her regard by an acceptable present of his own portrait in oil—an early essay, hard, dry, and laboured.

Though Hayley quotes, for the purpose of rejecting, the celebrated dictum of Parolles—

> "A young man married, is a man that's marr-ed"—

he, nevertheless, seems to have considered the doctrine a wise one. With respect to the tender subject of Romney's marriage, the poet appears to have spared no pains to ascertain the true state of the artist's feelings; and as he had himself some experience in the art of escaping from the sacred duties of wedlock, we must allow due weight to his exposition of the case. According to this biographer, his friend soon perceived that marriage was an obstacle to

his studies; that he was ruined as an artist, and that he might bid farewell to all hopes of fame and glory. Love, which, while it ministered at his sick couch, appeared with the lustre of an angel, assumed, the very moment the heyday was over, the hue of a demon, inflicting such mental sufferings as would have "excited," says the gentle Hayley, "compassion in a heart of flint.—The terror," our "swan of Eartham" proceeds, "of precluding himself from those distant honours which he panted for in his profession, by appearing in the world as a young married man, agitated the ambitious artist almost to distraction, and made him resolve, very soon after his marriage, as he had no means of breaking the fetters which he wildly regarded as inimical to the improvement and exertion of genius, to hide them as much as possible from his troubled fancy. The return of his master from his nuptial excursion, and his sudden removal from Kendal to York, which took place in a few days after the marriage of his apprentice, afforded a most seasonable termination to this excruciating conflict in the mind of Romney. Being thus removed from the object of his inquietude, he gradually recovered the powers of his extraordinary mind—a mind of exquisite sensibility, and of towering faculties, but unhappily distracted with a tumultuary crowd of ambitious and apprehensive conceits."

No man of right feeling can accept this account, or regard Romney otherwise than as one ready to sacrifice the peace of a worthy wife to his own selfishness or ambition. The sensibility which rose up against her whom he had loved and wedded was sensibility of an evil sort: nor are we to sympathize with him on account of his extreme youth—"the juvenile Romney" of Hayley was a man nearly twenty-two years old when he married. The account which the painter's son gives of these domestic arrangements softens, however, the sharp delineation of the poet: he speaks of no estrangement arising from the dread of being ruined as an artist: he denies the wish, which Hayley makes Romney express, to live separate from his wife; and moreover proves, by many circumstances, that something like conjugal love was still of his

household. To refuse belief to the statement of the filial biographer, on such a subject, would be very hardy: at the same time it should be remembered, that Hayley was not only requested by the painter to write his life, but was also supplied with many materials, and everywhere speaks as from authority. This much is certain—that he repeats his account often, and always strongly; and I know not how to dismiss it, unless we should suppose that the poet sought to palliate his own proceedings by a side wind, under the pretext of telling another man's story. "Romney," he says, "had received from nature a propensity to take more than common delight in contemplating, both as a man and an artist, the endearing smiles and playfulness of infancy; yet the over-ruling influence of ambition impelled him to sacrifice all those inestimable enjoyments which a man of tender feelings, who has chosen a dutiful wife, is generally anxious to secure, by devoting some of his time to cultivate, even in their earliest years, the affections of his children. On his return from York to Kendal, after an absence of several months, he had not only a dutiful wife, but an infant boy, to attach him to a domestic establishment: but the imagination of Romney, though tender and even trembling, was ardent in the extreme; it was like the spirit of Alexander's horse, that although apparently equal to any exploit, would start at his own shadow."

Having, by the help of this easy system of morality, satisfied himself that wedlock was only designed to hold common minds in order, and certainly not to keep down a mounting spirit such as his, Romney next began to consider the nature of the engagement which made him the servant of Count Steele: there was, however, some excuse for this. That person was one of those happy sons of genius, who sacrifice largely to the false gods of extravagance and finery; and who, in their enjoyment, seldom think of the time of payment, or of the desolation which their selfishness may spread among the humble furnishers of their wardrobes and tables. Having painted the heads of all who seemed willing to sit, and being pressed for money, which he knew not where to find, Steele

took his wife by the hand, and bidding his pupil to follow, said he should go to Ireland. Romney, perhaps, already perceived that he had followed far enough the fortunes of one who had little more knowledge to impart; and having, moreover, felt, according to Hayley, the bondage of matrimony, was less willing to abide in bondage of another kind. Ten pounds, which Steele had borrowed from him, were considered, in a mutual conference between the parties, as an equivalent for the unexpired term of servitude; the indenture was cancelled, and Romney, a free man, commenced on his own account when twenty-three years old.

The first of his efforts in oil, on his own account, is of a very humble kind—namely, a hand holding a letter, for the post-office window at Kendal. Portraits, however, were the works which brought him bread. His earliest are half lengths of Walter Strickland of Sizergh, and his wife, friends from whom he received many attentions. It was at their residence that he saw the Sir William Strickland of Lely, a Bishop of Namur and a French Admiral by Rigaud,—"the only pictures by other masters," says his son, "which he had any opportunity of studying, almost of seeing, before he went to London." There is also from the hand of Romney a portrait of Charles Strickland; a full length third size figure. He is sitting with a fishing-rod in his hand, and a waterfall in the background. Some other works of that period merit notice: more particularly the portrait of Morland of Cappelthwaite, in his shooting dress, with his favourite dog beside him; and that of Colonel Wilson of Abbothall accompanied by three spaniels. The dogs of these compositions are drawn with a freedom worthy of nature: artists have compared them to the dogs of Sneyders. There was no want of patronage on the part of the gentry of Westmoreland; indeed, there was a general feeling, his son says, in his favour,—a love for the man, which certainly would have been withheld, had he openly shown that disregard for the obligations of wedlock, which Mr. Hayley has, apparently with much unction and sympathy, described.

All his sitters, however, had not the generous feelings

of his friends of Sizergh and Abbothall. The Rev. Dr. Bateman, the well-known master of Sedbergh school, sat for his portrait at the moderate price of two guineas: the picture remained on hand, and a request of payment called forth the following singular epistle:—"I must take the liberty of expostulating a little with you, about your mean and tergiversating behaviour with regard to your promise of drawing my picture over again, at your return, with an addition to the price. Did you agree to that, or did you not? You know you did; and yet you now fly from your word, as you are going, as you think, out of my reach; for you shall certainly have a writ upon you for non-performance of contract. I shall not only do this, but I shall represent you in your proper colours (to borrow a term of your art), both here and to your friends at London, unless you perform your agreement. You will also see yourself and your behaviour painted in one of the public papers; as I am persuaded it is one of the most flagrant and scandalous breaches of faith I ever met with, and therefore merits a public exposition, and deserves to be exhibited as an object of public detestation. If you had come over only to make this picture tolerable, you would, by my recommendation, have got two or three more. *Cave litem, perfide pictor.*" An attorney's note lowered the Doctor's tone, and brought him to reason. Artists seldom find such rough customers as that learned man.

The time of Romney was not solely occupied in the manufacture of portraits, male and female; he had found leisure to make a score or so of compositions, chiefly of a cabinet size. Some twelve of them were copies after engravings, I apprehend, rather than originals; but the remaining eight, such as they were, seem to have been all his own: viz., 1. Lear wakened by Cordelia; 2. Lear in the storm, tearing off his robes; 3. A landscape with figures; 4. A quarrel: 5. A Shandean piece; 6. A droll scene in an alehouse; 7. A group of heads by candle-light; 8. A tooth drawn by candle-light. These pictures he exhibited in the Town-hall of Kendal; distributed free admissions; and then dispersed the whole by means of a lottery composed of eighty tickets, price half a guinea each. Of these early

works the fate of four only has been traced with certainty. "Lear wakened by Cordelia" was, after the lapse of many years, found in a broker's shop in London, and sent to Adam Walker, the natural philosopher, one of the earliest friends of Romney,—the same who supplied the world with information concerning the family of Hogarth. Mrs. Romney was the model for Cordelia. "Lear in the storm, tearing off his robes," is now the property of Mr. Braddyll of Conishead Priory; this was the very first attempt, and a bold one it was, which Romney made in poetic painting. The whole scene is seen in the strong light and shade of torches: there is a visible observance of nature; and, with lamentable deficiency in drawing, there is force of character. The "landscape with figures" was lost sight of till the year 1798, when the painter, accompanied by his son, went into the north of England with the intention of purchasing a house. The latter looked at a solitary painting hanging in the gallery of Barfield, a residence advertised for sale, and asked the owner by whom it was painted. "By the famous Romney, sir," was the answer. "I cast a significant glance at Mr. Romney," says his son, "but said nothing—

"'Con viso, che tacendo dicea, taci;'

for we were not known. I then proceeded to examine it with more attention. It represents a party, consisting of three gentlemen and two ladies, going on board a boat on a lake. The ladies show great timidity, so natural to the female character under the impression of danger; which expression is frequently accompanied with a certain degree of grace; but are politely urged by their attendant gallants. The colouring is beautifully clear, and as fresh as if recently painted. The execution evinces great facility and freedom of handling, and the touches are spirited and neat. The landscape also shows that he would have excelled in that branch of the art, had he made it his particular study. I have heard Mrs. Romney speak with much delight of a party of pleasure which she and her husband made with some friends to Bowness and the island on Windermere lake." That such things dwelt on her

memory is a proof of the worth of her heart; she loved to recall the kind looks and gentle acts of her husband during the days of her youth, and dwelt with no bitterness of feeling on his long and unaccountable estrangement.

The fourth and last of those works is "the Shandean piece," which found its way into the possession of the late Sir Allan Chambre. It represents Dr. Slop, all splashed with his journey, ushered by Obadiah into the parlour where Walter Shandy and Uncle Toby are discoursing on the nature of woman. The figures seem heavy and inert; the expression of the group has, however, had its admirers. The "Death of Le Fevre" is an attempt of a higher order. "The figures," says Adam Walker, "were about eighteen inches high, and wonderfully expressive. The dying lieutenant was looking at Uncle Toby, who sat mute at the foot of the bed; and by the motion of his hand was recommending his son to his care. The boy was kneeling by the bedside, and with eyes that expressed his anguish of heart, was, as it were, turning from a dying to a living father, begging protection; a most pathetic figure. Trim was standing at a distance, in his usual attitude, with a face full of grief. What became of this admirable picture I cannot tell." Enquiries have been made after this work in vain. Romney took it with him to London. He was introduced to Sterne at York, where Steele painted his portrait; and it has been imagined from this, that personal civilities and mutual acknowledgments of genius had passed, at this early period, between Romney and Yorick. Of this, however, there are no proofs; and indeed Romney himself, in one of his conversations, seems rather to discountenance the story.

As it has pleased Cumberland, and others of Romney's occasional companions, to represent him as a man coarse and illiterate, even after he had achieved his reputation, I may as well, before he leaves the mountains and lakes of Westmoreland for London, inquire into his attainments. It is true that he was taken from school in his eleventh year,—that from that period all regular instruction ceased,—and, that if knowledge could only be gained in "halls and colleges," Romney must be classed with the illiterate; but knowledge he certainly had found somewhere, and that,

too, before he made his appearance in the metropolis. Nature had given him strong talents, a keen eye, curiosity, and imagination; the exercise of his profession kept him in constant collision with people of various orders;—in a word, nature and society held their leaves open before him; and out of these universal volumes, with such aid of printed books as chance might throw in his way, Romney had, somehow or other, educated himself much better than ninety-nine out of a hundred, in any university in the world, ever were or will be. Were I called upon to furnish proof of these assertions with regard to the painter, it would be almost enough to quote one early letter of his to Adam Walker. The friends were separated: but in dreams they conversed together; and this is Romney's account of one of those imaginary meetings:—"Did I not find more pleasure in imaginative excursions than in bodily enjoyments, I would not give two-pence for this world. But I say my imagination took a journey—a journey it often takes; never a day comes but it is wandering to that same Preston. What it can find there so attractive, God knows. However, when I had travelled over that vast tract of land in half a second, the first object that saluted my sight was a tall lean figure, walking with an important air, as erect as the dancing master in Hogarth's 'Analysis.' 'Who can this be?' I said: 'I certainly must know the person; but he seems so disguised in importance and gravity, which looks so like burlesque, that I can scarce forbear smiling.' As he approached nearer, he turned his face towards me —with an earnest look made a stand—threw off his disguise,—by drawing up the muscles of his cheeks and hiding his eyes. I stood motionless three seconds—then ran up to him, caught hold of his hand with the eagerness with which sincere friends generally meet:—'My dear Walker, how do you do? By my soul I am glad to see you.'—'O sir, not so familiar.'—'O sir, I humbly beg pardon for saluting your importance in so rough a manner in the open street.'" These are not the words of an illiterate man, but of one who could write freely and well; and who, moreover, could penetrate the grave mask which Adam Walker, as a teacher of natural philosophy, thought

it fit and proper to wear over an unexampled kindliness of heart—a spirit filled with universal good will, homely humour, and festive enjoyment.

Romney was now twenty-seven years old, and as his name began to be heard beyond the limits of the province where he lived, his ambition also expanded; he desired a wider field and more enlightened judges. All this he knew could only be attained in London; and London, according to Hayley, had been the mark which he aimed at from the moment of his marriage. With this object in view, he had studied late and early to acquire money and skill; and now imagining he had enough of both, he became eager to be gone. A man who has a wife, and a son and daughter, ought to have something worthy of consideration besides himself: but such considerations, according to the author of the "Triumphs of Temper," "pressed not much on his feelings. The young painter," says Hayley, "like his early friend, the unfortunate alchemist, beheld, in an innocent wife, a supposed impediment to every splendid project. Perhaps the example of a friend, whom he had tenderly regarded, might influence the conduct of the painter; at all events he resolved, instead of settling as a family man, to wander forth alone into the distant world in quest of professional adventures. The state of his finances rendered it impossible for him to execute this resolution immediately; but whenever the fervent fancy of Romney had formed a favourite purpose he generally verified the maxim of Shakespeare, that 'all impediments in fancy's course are motives of more fancy.' His mental and corporeal powers were admirably suited to triumph over any difficulties which he might have to subdue. He had the spirit of industry united to that of genius, and few mortals could sustain assiduous labour so long as he could in a single occupation. In working rapidly and patiently at different places in the north for a few years, by painting heads as large as life at the price of two guineas, or figures at whole length on a small scale for six guineas, he contrived to raise a sum amounting almost to a hundred pounds: taking thirty for his own travelling expenses and leaving the residue to support an unoffending

partner and two children, he set forth alone, without even a letter of recommendation, to try the chances of life in the metropolis."

This account finds no favour with the son of Romney; who, in answer to Hayley, denies all premeditated intention, on the part of his father, of deserting his wife and children; assures us that he wished to visit London for the sole purpose of their more effectual support—that he consulted his wife, a courageous and energetic woman, on the propriety of the step—and that he had her full permission to try his fortune in the metropolis. Now, all this I most willingly believe, and shall suppose that Romney set off with the full determination of calling his wife to the head of his house so soon as circumstances permitted. But what did he actually do? He went to London, and there rose almost immediately into eminence; wealth flowed in, and patrons abounded: but the fortunate man kept his marriage a secret among his new friends; and, in fact, from that fatal moment lived with his wife no more till he had waxed old and infirm, and needed a nurse. "If Hayley had had any gratitude in his heart, or delicacy in his nature," says the son of the painter, "he would have shown more tenderness for the memory of his deceased friend, and more respect for the feelings of the surviving relations of that friend; but how could delicacy or feeling be expected from a man who has blazoned his own dishonour?" This seems an inadequate reply to the undeniable facts of the case: it must, however, be admitted that Romney's acquaintance lay much among those whose conduct afforded him countenance in this dark part of his doings; for instance, Williamson, the unfortunate alchemist, Laurence Sterne, and William Hayley.

Romney set out for London on the 14th of March, 1762, accompanied by two gentlemen of Kendal; and though menaced by a mounted highwayman, reached his destination in safety in seven days. British art was at that time in high favour. Reynolds stood then, as now, unrivalled in portraiture. Hogarth had long exhibited those domestic paintings which no one has yet approached. Wilson and Gainsborough showed their mastery over

every subject they handled; and West stood forth as the creator of the historical style in the land. There were excellent places of study; and the Society of Arts patronized rising merit largely, expending considerable sums in rewarding talent, and in exciting adventurers in painting, sculpture, and architecture. A person then, with merit such as Romney's, could not be likely to want either patrons or friends. A feeling, which has subsided sadly since, was active then in favour of historical painting; and the love of portraiture was, as it has ever been, strong among all ranks. He set up his easel in Dove Court, near the Mansion House—(most of the west end of *our* London was as yet country)—wrote to his wife a letter, still preserved, and beginning with a cold "My dear," to send him the pictures of "Lear" and "Elfrida;" and adding to these and others "The Death of David Rizzio," he formed a little exhibition in his humble studio, to which he invited such friends as his talents had been able to procure him. This latter picture, on which the painter set a high value, obtained little notice, and was finally destroyed by the very hands that formed it. I find it described as a work of "extraordinary merit, combining energetic action with strong expression;" and if so, it deserved a better fate. He was more fortunate in his "Death of Wolfe," painted in 1763, which was reckoned worthy of the second prize, of fifty guineas, from the Society of Arts. This must have been a welcome reward to one struggling both for money and distinction; but it caused both cavil and remonstrance.

It appears that Mortimer, an artist of fine poetic feeling, exhibited at the same time his picture of "Edward the Confessor seizing the Treasures of his Mother." When the decision of the Society of Arts was announced, there was one at least who considered that Mortimer had been injured, and favour shown to an adventurer and a stranger, who painted in what the classic critics of the day called "the coat and waistcoat style." The remonstrance was made to such purpose that the decision was revised and reversed; the premium was awarded to Mortimer, while Romney was obliged to be content with a present of

twenty-five guineas. Cumberland refrains from naming the person who caused the decision to be reversed. Hayley says: "The candid Romney, in relating this very interesting incident of his life to me, completely absolved those judges who gave their final sentence against him. He told me, with that ingenuous spirit which was one of his amiable characteristics, that Reynolds was the person who, with great justice, contended that the second prize was due to Mortimer for his picture of 'Edward the Confessor seizing the Treasures of his Mother;' a picture which Romney most liberally acknowledged to be so strikingly superior to his own 'Death of Wolfe,' that he was far from repining at being obliged to relinquish a prize too hastily assigned to him." The "candid Romney," we may surmise, did not in this instance speak exactly as he felt to his future biographer; at all events, his son has no inclination to dismiss the business so softly. "Who was the person," he asks, "through whose interference the decree was reversed?—the illustrious Reynolds: and can he be regarded as an impartial judge? What say facts and circumstances? He was too well versed in his profession, and had too shrewd an intellect, not to perceive in the author of that picture a future rival. Let any one look at the portraits painted by Romney at that time, and see whether there was not sufficient ground for jealousy on the part of Reynolds. The principle laid down by Sir Joshua establishes the truth of my observations—'That it is impossible for two painters in the same department of the art to continue long in friendship with each other.' Mortimer, be it remembered, was no portrait painter, and also dedicated his etchings to the President. I may also mention that not the slightest intercourse at any time subsisted between Reynolds and Romney; this could not at first have arisen from any backwardness on the part of the latter, because he could not but know that the notice of so distinguished an individual would have been of great advantage." To this it may be added, that Northcote represents Garrick as saying of Cumberland,—"He hates you, Sir Joshua, because you do not admire the painter whom he considers as a second Correggio."—"Who is that?"

replied Sir Joshua. "Why, his Correggio," answered Garrick, "is Romney." It may be inferred from this, that Reynolds had been speaking disparagingly of Romney to Garrick: one thing is certain—that thenceforward Reynolds and Romney were enemies.

The vacillating taste of the Society of Arts made some stir; and the stir was all to the advantage of Romney. He moved from his quarters in the city, and established himself near the Mews Gate, Charing Cross; he wished, I suppose, to breathe classic air—Dance and Mortimer resided in Covent Garden; Hogarth and Reynolds, in Leicester Fields. Here he raised the price of his portraits to five guineas; and with such success, that he ere long found his purse heavy enough to carry him to Paris. The inquiries of many anxious sitters, he said, compelled him to take that step:—"Have you ever been in France, Mr. Romney?" asked one: and "Have you ever studied in Rome?" inquired another:—for in those days, even more than now, it was the fashion to deem the skill of no untravelled artist equal to the task of painting an ordinary English head in oils.

Though Romney, up to this period, had seen little of high art, nevertheless he speaks with some boldness concerning that of France. "I was much struck," he says, "with the strange appearance of things, at the first sight, in Paris: the degeneracy of taste that runs through every thing is farther gone here than in London. The ridiculous and fantastical are the only points which they seem to aim at. The paintings of the time of Louis the Fourteenth are very great, and every church and palace is filled with them." From Vernet, the eminent landscape painter, he received much courtesy; and had, through his kindness, the doors of the Orleans Gallery opened for his use. Little as he esteemed the works of the living artists, he contrived to obtain from them some instruction in the science of his profession; and returned, murmuring, but improved, to London. The care with which he had studied the works of Rubens, in the Luxembourg Gallery, was visible in his portrait of Sir Joseph Yates, one of the Judges of the Court of King's Bench, which he painted on

his return. This was so successful, that Romney became rather a favourite with the gentlemen of the long robe. "He has certainly," says Hayley, "executed many admirable portraits from illustrious individuals of this profession; a profession which has a tendency, perhaps, to animate with peculiar vivacity the natural eloquence of manly features."

The picture of the "Death of King Edmund," which obtained for Romney the premium of fifty guineas from the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, was so little relished by others, that it could not find a purchaser. So sensitive was the artist on such occasions, that, from vexation at his want of skill, or in scorn of the world's want of discernment, he has been known to cut a composition to pieces, in spite of all entreaty or remonstrance. He contributed some pictures to the Exhibition of the Incorporated Society of Artists; among which was the portrait of a lady in the character of a saint. This sort of flattery —once so prevalent with painters—is now nearly worn out: we have now no Lady Bettys enacting the part of Diana—no Lady Janes descending as Venus in a cloud of ambrosia—nor Lady Marys tripping it barefoot among the thorns and brambles of this weary world, in the character of Hebe. We have none now who either "sinner it, or saint it" on canvas: the flattery which the painter has to pay is of a more scientific kind—he has to trust alone to the truth of his drawing, and the harmony of his colours.

As the fame and name of Romney began to rise in the world, his ambition also expanded, and he desired better-spread tables, and more luxurious accommodation. Perhaps, a wish to measure himself with Reynolds caused him to fix his residence in Great Newport Street, within a few doors of the President. Here he had a fine studio, and a well-replenished house. The success of his pencil became visible throughout all his establishment; and London rang from side to side of the prodigy who, in historical works, promised to equal the great masters of Italy—while, in portrait, he seemed to be in a fair way of rivalling Sir Joshua himself. One fortunate work contri-

buted largely to this blaze of success:—a picture of Sir George Warren and his Lady, with a little girl caressing a bullfinch, was so full of nature and tenderness, that all who saw it went away admiring, and spread the praise of the artist far and near.

To the natural question, why Romney chose to send his pictures to the Spring Gardens' Exhibition, and not to the Royal Academy, we have no satisfactory answer. Though one of the most distinguished painters of his day, and a man of great natural courtesy, it so happened, whether through pride on his part, or ill nature or bad taste on that of others, that he was never even elected an associate of the Royal Academy. In looking over the lists of the academicians of those days, I find some five-and-twenty, of whom no man has ever heard since; and thirty more, at least, who could have had no right to take precedence of a Romney. Reynolds, it would seem, disliked both the man and his works; and such was the omnipotence of the President, that on whomsoever his evil eye alighted, that person had small chance for the honours of the Academy. Fuseli, too—but that was in a later day—ranked Romney with those whom he called "coat and waistcoat painters;" in short, it is well known that the President, and all who loved to be well with him, had no good will to Romney. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that Romney was equally sensitive and proud—a man easily moved to anger or to love—covetous of approbation, and willing to resent difference of opinion, as a sin at once against himself and pure taste. He was, from all I have heard, a man likely enough to take a sort of pleasure in having it said that he belonged not to the Royal Academy, and witnessing the odium which the President's party incurred by keeping an artist of his talents and fame out of their ranks. However this might be, we know that he lived and died without academic honours;—and we know also, for our comfort, that his name has lost nothing by coming down to posterity untagged with *initials*.

Those who looked with a critical eye upon the works of Romney at this period, dwelt much on the absence of a sort of classic grace, which, his friends admit, he never

excelled in till after he had studied two years in Italy. It must be confessed, indeed, that the painter found more men at that period who were desirous to find fault than to be pleased with what he did; and one of the busiest of this ungentle tribe appears to have been Garrick. That eminent actor, it may be remembered, did what he could to perplex Hogarth, who attempted his portrait; and also succeeded in puzzling Gainsborough, much to the increase of the good humour of Sir Joshua Reynolds, to whom he related how many changes of face he put on, till the painter declared he was the devil, and threw down his brushes in despair. It happened that Cumberland, the dramatist, conceived a great regard for Romney, and exerted all the influence of tongue and pen to bring him into notice. Through his interest, Mrs. Yates, the accomplished actress, sat to him for his Tragic Muse,—a piece as much below the great work so called of Reynolds, as the personal majesty of Yates was below that of Siddons. Cumberland also endeavoured to propitiate Garrick. "I brought him," says Cumberland, "to see Romney's pictures, hoping to interest him in his favour. A large family piece unluckily arrested his attention: a gentleman in a close-buckled bob-wig, and a scarlet waistcoat laced with gold, with his wife and children (some sitting, some standing), had taken possession of some yards of canvas, very much, as it appeared, to their own satisfaction—for they were perfectly amused in a contented abstinence from all thought or action. Upon this unfortunate group when Garrick had fixed his lynx's eyes, he began to put himself into the attitude of the gentleman, and turning to Mr. Romney, 'Upon my word, sir,' said he, 'this is a very regular well-ordered family; and that is a very bright-rubbed mahogany table at which that motherly good lady is sitting; and this worthy gentleman in the scarlet waistcoat is, doubtless, a very excellent subject (to the state I mean, if these are all his children), but not for your art, Mr. Romney, if you mean to pursue it with that success which I hope will attend you.' The modest artist took the hint, as it was meant, in good part, and turned his family with their faces to the wall." This conduct

was abundantly dignified in Mr. David, it must be allowed!

Sallies such as these sank deep into the mind of Romney: he was extremely sensitive;—a piece of captious criticism, a touch of smart wit, or even a little humourous raillery, damped and disconcerted him, and paralyzed his hand in whatever he was engaged on. There are, indeed, at all times ten to sneer at the efforts of genius for one to applaud. Amongst the former was a Captain Dalton, a gentleman skilful in the unamiable art of turning everything into burlesque. It happened that this worthy was sitting for his portrait, when fixing his eyes on the "Initiation of a Virgin into the Mysteries of Bacchus," in which a number of females were engaged, he gave such a ludicrous and unchaste turn to the composition, that Romney was induced to lay the picture aside for ever. "A painter," says the artist's son, "should be cautious what kind of persons he admits into his private study. There are three sorts of people whom he should particularly exclude: the humourist, who catches at every idea he can distort and make ridiculous; the coarse unfeeling caviller, who ruffles and discourages diffident genius; and the indiscriminating flatterer, who, though he cannot impose upon the judgment of a man of sense, yet, by the constant incense of his fulsome compliments, may so far vitiate his feeling, as to render him less capable of bearing the judicious suggestions of liberal and enlightened criticism."

Romney, however, was not without consolation amidst all these distresses. No artist of that day was more berhymed or bepraised. Nameless bards led the way, and their betters followed, with epistles melodious and long. One of the former was a versifier of the name of Cockin, who contrived, in a purposed panegyric of many lines, to squeeze the praise of his friend within the limits of a parenthesis:

> "(Thy nicest knowledge of the impassion'd face—
> Conceptions true of dignity and grace—
> Colours from beauteous nature clear and chaste—
> A flowing pencil, industry, and taste.)"

These verses were called forth by two fine pieces of "Me-

lancholy" and "Mirth:" and the same productions brought a letter from Cumberland. The painter had embodied the descriptions of the "Allegro" and the "Penseroso" of Milton, and intended to name the pictures after those exquisite poems. This, it seems, was liable to criticism. "In the first place," says the dramatist, "the titles are not classical: they are modern, barbarous, and affected. They are borrowed from poetry—and by bringing Milton's descriptions to our minds, they rob your ideas of their originality. Sir, let the poets wait upon you, and give your figures their natural titles in their own language, or in established classical terms. The solemn figure is strictly that of the Muse Melpomene, and Reynolds has led the way in calling the other Euphrosyne: I think I should render those into English by the titles of Meditation and Mirth." The painters of those and later days seem to have been frequently inclined to run races with one another. Romney chose similar subjects with Reynolds; Barry did the same for West; Opie anticipated Grahame in his "Death of David Rizzio;" Reynolds said he wished to show legs with Ramsay's "Lord Bute;" there were three or four "Deaths of Wolfe;" there were two "Tragic Muses," two "Goddesses of Mirth," and "Satans" without number. The list might be extended. It is but justice, however, to say, that Romney's "Mrs. Yates as the Tragic Muse," was painted before the far-famed "Siddons" of Reynolds.

Romney was now thirty-nine years old: he had overcome the disadvantages of provincial obscurity; and notwithstanding many blemishes, of which a certain air of heaviness was not the least, his works had impressed the public with a very favourable notion of his genius. His pockets were filled by the lucrative business of portraiture; and his fame was established in the first ranks of British talent, by his historical and poetic works. Ambition, however, is the restless spur of genius: he had within him the feeling that the works which his friends most lavishly praised were far from being worthy of his powers, and resolved to devote two years to study in Rome, that he might master the secrets of the mighty men of old, and

give himself a fair chance of achieving a place beside them in the eternal temple of fame. All artists, indeed, are taught to believe that the way to perfection lies through the Sistine Chapel, and that they have only to inhale the air of Italy to become as inspired as Michael Angelo or Raphael. No Mussulman accounts himself worthy of paradise till he has kissed the black stone at Mecca; and no artist conceives he can claim rank with the great masters till he has worshipped in the Vatican. This was eagerly pressed upon Romney, both in prose and in verse: and, setting aside the noble aspirations of his own unsatisfied ambition, he knew the world well enough to be aware that two years' study abroad would be set down to the credit of his talents; and that whether he really profited by his travels or not, he would be hailed, on his return, as one improved in classic purity and grace. Thus stimulated from within and from without, our artist left his studio and an income of twelve hundred a year; and with a letter of introduction from the Duke of Richmond to the Pope in his pocket, and Humphrey, the miniature painter, for a companion, set sail for Italy on the 20th of March, 1773.

His departure was celebrated in verse by his friend Richard Cumberland; who, observing that the strains of very indifferent bards in praise of Romney were not unwelcome, taxed his own Muse, long accustomed to write according to the dictation of play-actors, and produced on this great occasion a piece which might have been easily written by a man of less reputation. He describes Painting as a lady ever young and blooming, and lavish of her affections—makes hasty mention of her flirtations in days of old with the dark masters—and then, attiring her as ladies were attired in the year of grace 1773, leads her at once into the studio of Sir Joshua Reynolds. The President, after a sitting or two, invites his brethren of the pencil to woo her and win her. Who were the great in art in those days, the poet obligingly informs us—

> "See Coates, see Dance, see Gainsborough seize the spoil
> And ready Mortimer, who laughs at toil;
> Crown'd with fresh roses, graceful Humphrey stands,
> While beauty grows immortal from his hands;

Stubbs like a lion springs upon his prey;
Next bold eccentric Wright, who hates the day;
Familiar Zoffani, with comic art;
And West, great painter of the human heart."

Of the success of Gainsborough, Mortimer, and West, to win this damsel's favour, all have heard. Dance thought gold and silver had a more radiant complexion, and wooed and wedded a lady, called in the fashionable lists of the day, "The Yorkshire Fortune," Mrs. Drummer, with eighteen thousand a year. Romney, a willing but a timid candidate, makes at last his appearance—

"No wild ambition swells his temperate heart,
Himself as pure and patient as his art;
A blushing, backward candidate for fame;
At once his country's honour and her shame.
Roused then at length, with honest pride inspired,
Romney, advance! be known and be admired."

The roar of the ocean deafened the ear of the painter to the flattery and melody of numbers such as these. He hastened toward Italy through France; nor did the rapidity of his journey prevent him making observations on art, on agriculture, and on the people.

"We were much pleased," he says, "with the dress of the lower order of women at Avignon. Their heads were dressed with cambric or muslin; a cap, with a plain border round the face, which projected very forward all about, and a kind of cambric handkerchief which tied under the chin, and covered the whole head in a very picturesque manner. Their faces are much browner than at Paris, which makes their linen look very white, and gives the whole head a very beautiful effect. They wear little jackets of different colours, but principally black, without stays; and a handkerchief round the neck of coloured silk or muslin that covers most of it, and meets between the breasts. Their petticoats are of a different colour from that of their jackets; and reach a little below their knees, which gives them a very light and airy appearance, and exposes limbs round and cleanly formed. This may be supposed to be very delightful to the eye of a painter, who had always been accustomed to see women dressed in

stays with petticoats almost covering their heels.—The Genoese women," he says in the continuation of his journal, "are in general elegant in their figure; have great ease in their action, and walk extremely well. They are of a good size; are fair, but very pale, which is occasioned by the dress they wear. It is a loose robe of calico or thick muslin which goes over their heads like a veil, and over their shoulders and arms like a capuchin. They let it fall over the forehead as low as the eyebrows, and twist it under the chin: they generally have one hand up almost to the chin, holding the veil with their fingers beautifully disposed among the folds, and the other across the breast. They are short-waisted, and have very long trains, which produce the most elegant flowing lines imaginable; so that with the beautiful folds of the veil or cloak, they are, when they move, the finest figures that can be conceived. When the veil is off, you see the most picturesque and elegant hair; it is braided up the back of the head and twisted round several times, and beautifully varied; it is pinned with a long silver pin." These two national pictures, by the hand of a skilful and observing man, are more valuable than a lecture on grace and proportion. They may be studied profitably by all artists who desire to attain excellence through the inspiration of living nature.

From Genoa, Romney proceeded to Leghorn by sea. The felucca to which he entrusted himself encountered a violent storm in the Gulf of Pisa; the danger was great—the crew alarmed—the painter sat silent, but in evident consternation. When, however, calmer weather came, and Romney was rallied on his gravity, "he protested," says Hayley, "that it did not arise from personal fear, but from tender concern at being separated for ever from his friends and relations." The sailors, meantime, had ascribed their peril to the knowledge which the saints had obtained that a heretic was on board, and believed that earnest prayers rather than good seamanship saved them. To drown an artist who loved his friends so well, would, no doubt, have been cruel in the saint who rules in the Gulf of Pisa. Romney, however, vowed he would go no more by sea where

land would serve the turn, and taking his route by Florence, on the 18th of June arrived in the "eternal city."

The history of a man who devotes himself to continual study can only be told by himself; it is by the works of genius he successively offers to the world that the epochs of his life are marked. Of the employment of Romney in Rome little has been related. "In the memoranda," says Hayley, "which my friend desired me to preserve as the foundation for a history of his professional pursuits, it surprises me to find no list of the works which he executed at Rome. The ardour and activity of Romney at this period of his life were so great and incessant, that I am persuaded he must have executed many drawings and paintings during that residence. He devoted himself to intense and sequestered study. Such was the cautious reserve which his singular mental infirmity—a perpetual dread of enemies—inspired, that he avoided all further intercourse with his fellow-traveller, and with all the other artists of his country who were then studying at Rome." The latter part of this assertion seems incredible. There arose, indeed, a coldness between him and his fellow-traveller, Humphrey, who was a gossip and an idler; and he had, at all times, a rooted aversion to unprofitable companions. But he acquired several friends during his stay in Rome, which in all extended to nineteen months; and his son assures us that he never perceived that dread of enemies upon him of which the poet speaks. If Romney ever made such a statement to Hayley, he must have done so for the sake of effect; and to be sure, the man who could say that he meditated the leaving of his wife almost as soon as the marriage-knot was tied, that he might study and become distinguished, might be capable enough of wishing it to be believed that in pursuit of fame he had quarrelled with his friends and shut himself up from the world.

His Roman seclusion admits, however, of other explanation. Though Romney raised a scaffold to copy paintings in the Vatican, and worshipped, as Reynolds had done before, the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo, his chief study was in the living school. The art of Britain

has never been able to profit by the beauty which Britain contains. There is a reluctance, not affected but real, on the part of the humblest of our females to display their charms for the furtherance of art. Neither affection nor gold has yet persuaded them out of this coy shamefacedness—but it is otherwise in Italy: there the love of art is deeper, or the sense of shame less; and ladies even of rank, —princesses indeed,—are not reluctant to give art permission to adorn itself with fresh graces imitated from their persons. To a complaisant saint of the softer sex Romney dedicated much of his time, and familiarized himself with an image of beauty living and breathing before him. From this woman he made many sketches and only one picture. But that picture is of great beauty: "It represents," says the painter's son, "a naked female in the character of a wood nymph, reposing at full length upon the ground, with her back turned towards the spectator. The fore part of her body is raised, and resting upon her right arm and elbow; and she is contemplating the reflection of her beautiful face in a brook. She lies upon a drapery of white linen and a pink robe, which gives a rich warmth of colouring to the whole. The background is a wild forest. This picture came into the possession of Mr. Keate, the surgeon, for an inadequate price. Mr. Romney began a half-length portrait of Mrs. Keate, and received in payment for it forty guineas; but the portrait, from some cause or other, was never finished, and Mr. Keate requested this picture in its stead. The wood nymph was, in my estimation, cheap at two hundred guineas; but it was not the fashion in those days to buy fancy pictures." Nor is it much the fashion yet—fancy is going out as utility comes in; her choicest efforts are at a sad discount in the great market of art as well as of literature.

Another of Romney's Roman works was not so successful. He had the audacity to attempt to paint a picture of Almighty God, and failed where no man could succeed. Under the title of "Providence brooding over Chaos," there appeared neither more nor less than a venerable man floating, with a long beard, and outspread arms, on a cloud, with abundance of darkness and obscurity below. When,

years afterwards, Lord George Gordon and his mob were purging the Catholic chapels, and plundering the houses of opulent professors of that religion, Romney became alarmed lest they should mistake his "Providence brooding over Chaos" for some idolatrous object of devotion, and so pillage his establishment: it was therefore removed to a back apartment. Long afterwards, at the sale of his pictures, it was knocked down by the auctioneer's hammer under the name of Jupiter Pluvius—a good selling name with classical men.

There appears no evidence, either in the shape of sketches or of paintings, to support the notion of Hayley, that Romney owed those infirmities which overclouded the evening of his day to his indulgence, while in Italy, in that honourable, yet perilous, kind of intemperance—intemperance of study.

Romney happened to lodge in the Jesuits' College at Rome, when that order incurred the suspicion of the Pope; and one morning, as a number of arrests were made, he walked forth among the armed sentinels stationed at the doors. The painter, it seems, was in a sort of reverie, from which he was roused by a soldier bringing down his musket suddenly, and levelling his tube directly at his head. The intimidated artist had the presence of mind to call out, "English, English!" The soldier's brow cleared up; he raised his musket, and bade him go on. At Venice he met with an adventure of another kind. The learned and whimsical Wortley Montague was living there in the manners, and habit, and magnificence of a Turk. Romney conceived a sudden affection for this picturesque personage; drew an admirable head of him in his Eastern garb; and willing to show all respect to the city where he sojourned, coloured and finished it in the style of the great Venetian masters, with a success which surprised many.[1] The painter and the traveller held many conversations; and a mutual regard was growing up, when one day, as Montague was eating a small bird, a sharp bone stuck in his throat, which produced instant inflammation, and, on

[1] Exhibited at the "Old Masters." It is one of his finest men's portraits.—Ed.

the third day, death. The Earl of Warwick bought this portrait for fifty guineas. He copied it also in crayons, that he might try to fix that fugitive manner of painting; and in this he succeeded so well, by an elaborate mode of glazing, that "he produced," says his son, "a clearness and brilliancy of colouring, hardly equalled in the finest Venetian pictures." Hayley erroneously calls this the original picture, which, he says, was presented to a friend. This friend was the mother of Thomas Hayley, who asked Mr. Romney for it; prompted, I have no doubt, by Mr. Hayley, who availed himself of every means to get possession of such pictures as he set his mind upon.

Having stored his portfolios with images of Italian beauty, and acquired, as he imagined, a deep insight into the long-concealed mysteries of colour, as well as the principles of composition, he took the road for England and arrived in London on the 1st of June, 1775. His return was announced by the benevolent Muse of Cumberland, in strains flattering and friendly: and he had no reason to suppose that he was either forgotten or neglected. Sitters, titled and untitled, flocked to his studio, and persons of taste looked in to see how far Italy had inspired him. The Duke of Richmond, one of the most effectual patrons of art in those days, desired to sit for his portrait; and the name of Romney was again heard pronounced in the same breath with that of Reynolds. Two works, of no ordinary worth, are ascribed to this period: the first of these was of a domestic nature, and in some measure a portrait, as the head was imitated from the daughter of Guy, a surgeon in Chichester. "It was," says the artist's son, "one of the loveliest things I ever saw; it was truly angelic. It represented a young female

> "With looks commercing with the skies,
> Her rapt soul sitting in her eyes."

It was a sight sufficient to inspire the beholder with sentiments of religious sympathy; it was a visible illustration of piety—a sermon addressed to the eyes: it was equal to Guido in grace, and superior in expression. Her long flowing hair floating loosely over her shoulders, her head

encircled with a small blue fillet, and her soft blue eyes, all contributed to sanctify the character." This was one of those pictures which Hayley condescended to like, and the painter presented it to his son; it was, after the poet's death, disposed of by auction. The other piece I alluded to was designed to be in the style of Correggio, whom Romney passionately admired. The subject was from that passage in the "Tempest," where Miranda says, "Beseech you, father;" and Prospero exclaims, "Hence! hang not on my garments." There is much dignity, and an assumed austerity, in Prospero; while Miranda is most bewitching and lovely. She gazes with admiration and growing tenderness on Ferdinand; her hair is loosely braided, but is too redundant to be restrained, and floats on the air; the gentle Ariel is in his ministry near, and a troop of shadowy nymphs are dancing on the "yellow sands." It was the painter's custom, when a sitter disappointed him, to take up a waste canvas and make sketches of historical works. Of these he made many, and some of them he expanded into full size paintings. When he had studied till he mastered the conception and detail of his subject, he dashed it rapidly out on the canvas. He could make a sketch fit to work from in the course of an hour, in which, says his son, the effect of light and shade, the harmony of colouring, the composition of the figures, and even the drawing and expression, would be given at once as it were by magic. He sometimes painted directly from invention, but never with a copy before him: for he never made a finished drawing for a picture. West, on the contrary, used to finish his drawings minutely; and his great pictures, being copied from them, lost much of their original freedom by this process of imitation.

Soon after his return from Rome, the death of Coates, an academician, vacated a spacious house in Cavendish Square, and there Romney resolved to establish himself. This mansion continued to be memorable: it was afterwards the residence of a painter and poet, a scholar and gentleman—Sir Martin Archer Shee. "It was at Christmas, in the year 1775," says Hayley, "that Romney took possession of this memorable residence. He was then in

the very prime of life; his health had been improved, and his mind enriched by two years' foreign study; and he had the active good wishes of several friends in his favour: yet, in his singular constitution, there was so much nervous timidity united to great bodily strength, and to enterprising and indefatigable ambition, that he used to tremble when he waked every morning in his new habitation, with a painful apprehension of not finding business sufficient to support him. These fears were only early flutterings of that hypochondriacal disorder which preyed in secret on his comfort during many years; and which, though apparently subdued by the cheering exhortations of friendship and great professional prosperity, failed not to show itself more formidably when he was exhausted by labour in the decline of life."

Those who are acquainted with the history of Romney will, doubtless, now be looking for the appearance of his wife at the head of his house. He has obtained fame and opulence; has a residence not unworthy of the first of the land; his table is well furnished; and all that he desired to find, when he left her lonely with thirty pounds in his pocket, he has more than found. It is, however, not more strange than true, that, from the moment Romney sets his foot in London, his wife is forgotten by himself and by his biographers: there is no impeachment against her character, or even her manners; yet so it is—she is left pining and solitary, unknown to the world, and to every appearance utterly and entirely neglected by the now flourishing man who, in youth and poverty, had vowed to love and cherish her. This is a sore blemish in the character of Romney, and I have no doubt, his own sense of this was the chief cause of those fits of gloom and melancholy which darkened his declining years. He erred at the outset, in not calling her to London the moment that success dawned upon him; he erred again in not introducing himself as a married man, when the company he kept required him in honour to make the avowal; and he erred without hope of retrieving his character, when he neglected to give the keys of his house in Cavendish Square to her who deserved much more than that repara-

tion. No good reason whatever has been assigned for this cruel and most unmanly conduct.

Romney probably considered the friendship of Hayley, which about this time he acquired, as a compensation for domestic solitude. Both the feeble over-rated poet and his favourite painter seem to have rejoiced at this propitious occurrence; and mutual flattery grew more and more the bond of their union. The artist's son, however, appears never to have liked this intimacy. These are his words:—"The influence which the friendship of Hayley exercised over the life of Romney was, in many respects, injurious. His friendship was grounded on selfishness, and the means by which he maintained it was flattery. He was able also, by a canting kind of hypocrisy, to confound the distinctions between vice and virtue, and to give a colouring to conduct that might, and probably did, mislead Romney on some occasions. He drew him too much from general society, and almost monopolized him to himself, and thus narrowed the circle of his acquaintance and friends. By having intimated an intention of writing Romney's life, he made him extremely afraid of doing anything that might give offence. He was always interfering in his affairs—volunteering his advice; and I have much reason to believe that whatever errors the latter may have committed, they were mainly owing to the counsel or instigation of Hayley." These are strong expressions—too strong, perhaps, for a biographer to use, who can only support them by the fact that on one occasion, when Meyer wished Romney to exhibit his pictures at the Royal Academy, in order that he might be proposed as a member of that body, the officious sonnetteer dissuaded him from pressing the matter, because of the *mental peculiarities* of the painter.

The money and the time laid out by Romney in bettering his skill and taste were now to be more than repaid. The poetic commendations of his friends, "if they did not," as Gibbon said, "contribute much to his professional prosperity, might be justly called an elegant advertisement of his merit," and were therefore useful; while the titled and the learned saw, or imagined they saw, such a

striking improvement in the conception and handling of his works, that one of them exclaimed, "His manner of painting is raised beyond measure by his studies in Italy; his pictures, instead of being cold and heavy, are warm, tender, light, and beautiful." So much did his commissions, as orders for pictures are called, amount to, and so loudly was his fame announced, that Reynolds began to believe that the town were in earnest when they said he had lost the half of his empire to Romney. There were not wanting go-betweens;—friends, good-natured and candid, who filled the ears of these eminent men with idle sayings and foolish rumours, and thus inoculated an honourable rivalry with much of the bitterness of personal dislike. Lord Thurlow, it seems, had said, in his ironical way, "There are two factions in art—and I am of the Romney faction;" and this careless expression was bandied about to the sore annoyance of Reynolds. Nay, so precarious is fame, that for several years Romney had manifestly the ascendency in the scale of popular opinion; and the President had to soothe himself with the belief that the day would come when men's eyes would be opened, and the grave and quiet grandeur of his works would triumph. In these times of bitterness and feud, when Sir Joshua, in the course of conversation, was compelled to speak of his rival, he merely indicated him by saying, "The man in Cavendish Square."

A list of all the works which Romney executed in those busy days would occupy several pages; it would, however, be absurd to specify many of them, since they can possess little interest except for particular families. I shall mention such pictures as are remarkable for containing more than one figure, or for their superior merit, or on account of the character and station of the individuals represented:—1. The children of Earl Gower (now Marquis of Stafford), a large picture, representing three young ladies, with a little boy dancing, and the eldest daughter playing on the tambourine: this is a masterly and graceful work. 2. The late Duchess of Gordon, with her son, then Marquis of Huntley. 3. The Countess of Albemarle and her son, Lord Albemarle, with dogs. 4. The children of

Lord Elcho (now Earl of Wemyss). 5. The Beaumont family, of Whitby-Beaumont, near Wakefield: a large picture, representing four brothers and a sister contemplating the portrait of a deceased brother. 6. Mrs. Prescot and three children. 7. Master and Miss Clavering, with dogs: Miss Clavering is caressing a pup in her bosom, and her brother holds two spaniels in a string, one of which is leaping up to claim the pup. This is a fine, natural, and elegant composition; the colouring is vivid, and the grouping perfect. "Would," exclaims the son of the artist, "that a few such pictures as this" (and there are many such) "were placed in the British Institution, that Romney might have a fair chance with Reynolds." 8. Master and Miss Cornwall, children of Sir George Cornwall, Bart. 9. Sir James Harris, three quarters. 10. Lady Harris and Miss Harris. 11. Sir Hyde Parker, a whole length, and not unworthy of being placed by the side of the celebrated Keppel of Sir Joshua. 12. Lady Elizabeth Compton, afterwards Lady George Cavendish. 13. An Indian Chief. 14. Lady Craven, ordered by Horace Walpole. 15. Colonel Johnes of Hafod and his friends: a large picture, with Mrs. Johnes introduced as a fortune-teller. 16. Miss C. and Miss Hester Grenville, daughters of the Hon. Mr. Grenville. 17. Lord Stanley and Lady Charlotte. 18. Mrs. Bracebridge and child—a whole length and recumbent. This list, purposely imperfect as it is, proves the popularity of Romney. In one of these lucky and prosperous years he earned, by portraiture alone, some three thousand six hundred pounds.

Hayley now began to be afraid lest the spirit of ambition and labour, which he believed his own verses had awakened in Romney, would be crushed like the flower beneath the furrow's weight; and imagined he stood in need of a frank and faithful monitor to guard him against those excesses of impetuous and undisciplined imagination, which often lead the fervent votaries of fame to destroy their own powers by intemperance of study. "I entreat you," cries this fantastic Mentor, "in the name of those immortal powers, the beautiful and the sublime, whom you so ardently adore—or, to speak the language of your

favourite Macbeth, 'I conjure you by that which you profess,' to moderate that intense spirit of application, which preys so fatally on your frame: exchange for a short time the noxious air of London for the cheerful tranquillity and pure breezes of our southern coast." To this summons, in the vein of Ancient Pistol, the painter replied by wiping his brushes, mounting the coach, and proceeding to Eartham, at that period, and for long after, the residence of Hayley. It would appear, however, that the poet had no desire to let the genius of his guest run to waste in the wilds of Sussex; he invited him from profitable work in London, only that he might tax his strength for the gratification of his own vanity in the country. "Whenever Romney was my guest," says the author of the "Triumphs of Temper," "I was glad to put aside *my own immediate occupation* for the pleasure of searching for and presenting to him a copious choice of such subjects as might happily exercise his powers. I have often blamed myself for not preserving some memoranda of the infinite number of sketches that my active and rapid friend used to make on his visits: several were on canvas in colours; but the greater number were executed very hastily on paper, with a pen." Some of the happiest of these the artist laid apart to form the groundwork of future pictures, which he never found leisure to accomplish; but the greater portion were thrown aside, and never thought of more.

About this time, however, Romney found leisure to make some really noticeable excursions into the regions of history and fiction. One of these was a cartoon in black chalk, representing a Lapland witch gazing on the sea from a headland, and enjoying the distress of mariners in a tempest of her own creation. The beauty of the female form and face was preserved, while the whole expression was sublimely malignant. Another favourite subject was the heroic humanity of that Woltemad mentioned by Thunberg the traveller, who, on horseback, rushed repeatedly into a stormy sea at the Cape of Good Hope, and saved the lives of many men and women during a shipwreck. The scene is wild and touching. He desired, too, to paint the benevolent Howard bringing mercy and

loving-kindness into the prison-dungeons of Europe. That illustrious man had just arrived from a journey to Holland, when he was seen by Hayley, attired in a sort of travelling garment made in Saxony. The poet, who was a bit of an actor, and moreover desired much to be seen, though in borrowed light, went up to him and exclaimed, "This is the robe in which you should be painted by Romney; I will implore the favour on my knees, if you will let me take you in this very picturesque habiliment to my friend in Cavendish Square."—"Oh, fie!" said Howard, on seeing the poet on his knees,—"oh, fie! sir; *I* did not kneel to the emperor."—"And, I assure you," said the supplicant, "I would never kneel to you if you were not above an emperor in my estimation." The philanthropist was inexorable respecting his own person, but mentioned several scenes which he had witnessed, and which he thought worthy of being embodied in lasting colours.

The memory of Lord Thurlow was richly stored with sublime, pathetic, and picturesque passages from the ancient poets, and he often expatiated to Romney on the excellence of such subjects for the pencil. He pointed out the Orpheus and Eurydice of Virgil; desired it to be painted in large for himself, and even took the trouble of translating the passage into harmonious prose. The notions of the great judge and those of the painter were, however, singularly at variance concerning the proper mode of handling the subject: the former seemed desirous of exacting from art a representation of passing emotions; an embodiment of words which, like the last sobs of the goddess that came bubbling up in the lake wherein she disappeared, were beyond the power of colours.

Romney found a more tractable, if not a more reasonable patron in Hayley, who succeeded in persuading him to paint the Serena of his "Triumphs of Temper." There was, as we may suppose, much effusion of verse ere this was accomplished; and if the painter's success equalled his poet's praise, the work was a happy one.[1]

[1] The portrait of Honoria Sneyd, as "Serena," is one of the most charming of Romney's impersonations. It is well known by means of

Romney was one of those artists so happily described by the poet,

"Fond to begin, but for to finish loth."

Much of the prime of his life was squandered in designing and sketching works of an historical nature, which, having merely indicated them on the canvas, he touched no more. Little encouragement was, indeed, given to poetic works at that period; and Romney had been obliged to destroy, for want of house-room, some of his larger paintings. Enthusiasm will be damped at last, when work after work of genius and fancy has been shown to the world in vain: public neglect, when persisted in, destroys confidence and even lessens power: a man will never work better than when the shouts of the multitude are ringing in his ears; and he will lose a little of his own esteem, when he finds he is losing that of others. It is much to be regretted that Romney allowed the first heat of his fancy to cool before he rendered some of his fine sketches and designs worthy of taking rank as works of art. The world has been a sad loser in consequence of the multitudes of noteless, nameless faces which it sent to the painter's easel, to the continual interruption of his historic productions.

Other causes than the crowding of sitters may, however, be assigned for the number of fine paintings which stood in his studio unfinished. Richly as his mind was stored with images of beauty, and greatly as he admired children, his fancy frequently failed him; and if the model, which he

engraving, but where the original picture now is I cannot discover. It is exceedingly difficult to find out the present owners of Romney's pictures.

Southey, writing of this picture, says:—"The artist has known how to conceive and represent that perfect loveliness, which is only to be found when the features, even when most beautiful, derive their peculiar charm from the sweetness and gentleness of disposition which the countenance expresses."—Ed.

"He has imparted to the ideal fair
Yet more than beauty's bloom, and youth's attractive air;
For in his studious Nymph the enamour'd eye
May through her breast her gentle heart descry,
See the fond thoughts that o'er her fancy roll,
And sympathy's soft swell that fills her soul."

procured to supply the deficiency, happened not to come to appointment, he was inconsolable, and often threw his picture aside, never to resume it. When he painted "Tragedy and Comedy nursing Shakespeare," "The Infant Shakespeare attended by the Passions," and "The Alope"—in all of which a naked infant was introduced—he had for a model a fine child belonging to a soldier of the Guards. It happened that the child sickened and died while these pictures were in progress; and on that account they were never finished. His group of "Children in a Boat drifted out to Sea," was left incomplete, from the same cause—a work of much promise, combining landscape with human feeling. His "Shepherd Boy asleep, watched by his Dog at the Approach of a Thunderstorm"—a natural subject, and such as Gainsborough excelled in—was laid aside because his errand-boy who served as a model had to be dismissed for misconduct. Another picture, "The Girl mourning over her Fawn just killed by Lightning," was tossed into the corner, when in a very forward state, for want of a fawn to work from. Hayley was charmed with this picture, and carried it off as it was. "The Milkpail overturned by a She-goat anxious to approach its Kid, which a Milk-girl is fondling," a happy and clever thing, was also left incomplete for want of a suitable goat; and the picture of "Nature unveiling herself to Shakespeare" remained half done, in spite of the eulogium of Helen Maria Williams,—

> "The partial Nymph unveil'd her awful face,
> And bade his colours clear her features trace."

"I could enumerate many other unfinished fancy pieces," says the Rev. John Romney, "in all stages of progress, which from divers impeding causes were suffered to accumulate in every corner of the house: no picture, however, was set aside from any difficulty in the art itself. I could mention several causes which contributed to produce those vast heaps of unfinished portraits that obstructed the passage to his gallery. The chief were the poverty or the meanness of the parties to whom the pictures belonged. I have known ladies' portraits, amounting in value to a thousand guineas, remain unfinished for many

months for want of a model with fine hands and arms. Some portraits were abandoned in consequence of crim. con., but more frequently a less flagrant vice led to the same result: it was no uncommon circumstance, that a *chère amie* having been brought to sit for her portrait, both she and picture were deserted before the latter was finished. In cases of this kind, I should recommend to painters to insist upon full payment at the first sitting; unless, indeed, the extraordinary beauty of the female should stamp a value upon the picture equal to the sitting price."

Of the painter's prices and modes of study we have information from his biographers, with all of whom he lived in terms of close intimacy. In the year 1785, a regular account of his sitters was kept by Robinson, one of his pupils: the earnings of the pencil amounted to £3,635. The charge for a head had gradually arisen from two guineas to twenty; a kit-cat, from three guineas to thirty; a half length, from four guineas to forty; what is called a half whole-length, from five guineas to sixty; and a whole length, from six guineas to eighty. He was fond of painting by lamp-light, but wore a shade to obstruct the direct glare. When tired of this, he amused himself by making designs in chalk, sometimes as large as life—more frequently of the size of his portfolio—on which he wrought till bed-time. "He mostly," says his son, "painted a gentleman's three quarters portrait in three or four sittings; especially if no hands were introduced. The first sitting was three-quarters of an hour; the others, about an hour and a half each. During the spring months he frequently had five sitters a day, and occasionally even six. The only time he had for fancy subjects was in the intervals between the sitters, or when they disappointed him; and, having a canvas at hand, he often regarded such a disappointment as a schoolboy would a holiday. He often wrought thirteen hours a day, commencing at eight or earlier, and, except when engaged out, which was not frequently, prolonging his application till eleven at night." Of the wear and tear, mental and bodily, of such close application, the artist was not unconscious; yet he enjoyed the company of the elegant, or the beautiful, and acknowledged that its absence would be

felt: "My health," he thus writes in after life, "is not at all constant; my nerves give way; and I have no time to go in quest of pleasure, to prevent a decline of health. My hands are full, and I shall be forced to refuse new faces at last, to be enabled to finish the numbers I have in an unfinished state. I shall regret the necessity of forbearing to take new faces: there is a delight in novelty greater than in the profit gained by sending them home finished: but it must be done." He was fond of painting the portraits of distinguished men, and of his intimate friends, and on such occasions exerted himself more zealously than when he had mere profit in view. He was accounted liberal and generous; one who knew the value of money, indeed, but reckoned it secondary to friendship and fame.

To recruit his exhausted powers, Romney now retired annually, for a summer month or so, to the residence of Hayley at Eartham. Here he supped full with flattery, served up in prose as well as verse. Lifting the curtain of this little stage, we find ourselves in the midst of a select coterie of poets, poetesses, painters, and wits—Hayley himself, Miss Seward, Charlotte Smith, Eliza Heron, Romney, and Cowper, besides others with or without name, not less willing to admire the liberality of their entertainer, and all on marvellous good terms with themselves and with each other. Cowper sat once for his portrait; and rewarded the artist for a very admirable work, which secures to posterity the looks of one of the great heirs of fame, by a sonnet, which weighs in the balance like current gold, when compared to the glittering Birmingham ware with which the rest of the circle were used to pay him.

"Romney! expert infallibly to trace
On chart or canvas, not the form alone
And semblance, but, however faintly shown,
The mind's impression too on every face,
With strokes that Time ought never to erase—
Thou hast so pencill'd mine; and though I own
The subject worthless, I have never known
The artist shining with superior grace:
But this I mark, that symptoms none of woe
In thy incomparable work appear:

Well, I am satisfied, it should be so;
Since, on maturer thought, the cause is clear:
For in my looks what sorrow couldst thou see
While I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?"[1]

This coterie, among but not of whom was sometimes Cowper, lived in—I might say *upon*—the mutual interchange of the most ludicrous flattery. When they gathered together at the breakfast table, the ordinary greetings were Sappho, and Pindar, and Raphael; they asked for bread and butter in quotations, and "still their speech was song." They then separated for some hours: poetasters, male and female, retired, big with undelivered verse; and Romney proceeded to sketch from the lines of Hayley, or make designs as he had suggested. When the hour appointed for taking the air came, the painter went softly to the door of the poetess—opened it gently, and if he found her—

"With looks all staring from Parnassian dreams,"

he shut it and retreated: if, on the contrary, she was unemployed, he said, "Come, Muse;" and she answered, "Coming, Raphael;" and so the time flew by. Romney, on hearing Miss Seward speak affectionately of her father, painted her portrait, and desired it might be given to the parent she loved so much. The poetess was eager, in concert with Hayley, to make some return; and truly the painter must have been a simple man if he failed to be astonished with the result of their joint efforts. Of the eighty and eight lines called "Coming to Eartham" and "Leaving Eartham," there are only two which have reference to the subject, and full fifty-six which refer to no subject at all. They are big with Eolus, Orion, Muse, Boreas, Auster, Zephyr, Eurus—(I take them down as they come) —Famine, and Ceres. It happened to rain when the poetess of Lichfield arrived, and hence all these demons of tempest and storm. On the other hand, the lady goes mourning away, and exclaiming—

[1] This portrait, which was simply drawn in crayons, was engraved by William Blake, as he only could have engraved it. It is still in the possession of the Johnson family.—Ed.

"Groves *half* as fair as these may meet the eye:
Thy bowers, O Lichfield, lovely scenes afford;
But ah! what keen regrets shall wake the sigh
To miss the pleasures of the Haylean board?
Where, as his pencil, Romney's soul sublime
Glows with bold lines original and strong,
While Fanny's lays and kindred spirit chime
With fair Eliza's wit and sparkling song."

From this summer-dream, amid the sing-song of Miss Seward, and the "pleasures of the Haylean board," Romney was awakened to embark in a grand speculation, which was to lift historical painting into life and dignity. This was the Shakespeare Gallery, the original idea of which has been claimed for Fuseli, West, Romney, Nichol, and Boydell. Fuseli declared that the Shakespeare Gallery occurred to his fancy as he gazed on the wonders of the Vatican. The son of Romney asserts, that at a dinner given by Boydell, when Shakespeare's name was mentioned, his father, with his usual ardour and enthusiasm, suggested the plan of a national gallery of pictures from that great dramatist, and that the proposal was received with rapture. I know not how this may have been. The reluctance of Reynolds to come into the speculation has been ascribed to his dislike of the artist who originated it. Fuseli had, indeed, made designs from Shakespeare; but Romney had done so likewise at an earlier day, and was moreover engaged at that very time on his picture of "The Tempest," in which Hayley sat for Prospero. Whoever commenced it, we know who contributed most towards it. Romney, it would appear, soon cooled; indeed, the fever in which he commenced his undertakings seldom lasted long: but here, in addition to his natural infirmity of fickleness, he was stung by hearing of a thousand guineas given to Reynolds for Macbeth, and another thousand which West had for King Lear, while six hundred had been thought enough for his own picture from "The Tempest."[1] Another cause assigned for his early coolness was, the discovery which he made that the Boydells were con-

[1] This picture was afterwards sold, according to Hoppner, "to a gentleman in the City for the sum of fifteen guineas, about half the cost of the frame."—Ed.

verting it into a commercial speculation. On this point the Rev. John Romney says—"Nichol, by since claiming the merit of having been the first to propose this scheme, has been guilty of a misrepresentation: he might, however, have pleaded a secondary claim; for, being sufficiently alive to the interests of his own profession, but devoid of all feeling for the art of painting, he proposed, as an improvement, that it should be accompanied with a splendid edition of the plays, decorated with prints from the pictures, which, corresponding also with the views of the Boydells as print-sellers, was in like manner approved by the party."

In the history of art, Britain claims the honourable distinction of having produced two galleries of paintings from two of her noblest poets: and it must not be omitted, that, numerous and valuable as those works are, they were projected and completed without other patronage than the individual generosity or enthusiasm of a few members of the Royal Academy, and some spirited tradesmen. For the Shakespeare Gallery, Romney painted two pictures, viz. "The Tempest," and "The Infant Shakespeare attended by the Passions."[1] The first of these has been already mentioned; but it suffered a sad change before it passed to the Boydells. The original picture represented Prospero, Miranda, and Caliban, with a shipwreck in the background, Some pretender to taste declared the composition was not strictly historical, as it consisted only of three figures. Romney, either from deference to that person's judgment, or from a belief that he could improve the picture, brought the shipwreck into the foreground, and expelled Caliban. To alter a work of genius is a dangerous experiment; he toiled and toiled in vain to work it up into proper grandeur and consistency; and though there is no deficiency in grouping and character, he never ceased to regret that he

[1] "The Infant Shakespeare," now in the possession of Mr. F. Chamberlayne, who also possesses the "Newton showing the Effects of the Prism," is spoken of by Redgrave as one of the best works of the painter. "The heads, however, are out of proportion to the bodies, and the figures the less elegant on this account. The picture is rich in tone, though unnaturally brown, but has suffered dreadfully from the use of improper pigments and vehicles."—Ed.

had deserted his original design. There were other five subjects which he sketched for the same collection, but did not execute, viz., "The Banquet," and "The Cavern Scene," in Macbeth; "Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page;" "Bolingbroke and Margery Jourdain conjuring up the Fiend;" and "The Maid of Orleans." He perceived, he said, that the Boydells wished to employ the elder painters no farther than was sufficient to give an impulse to the undertaking, and then complete it with works from young artists at low prices. In consequence he directed his attention to other objects, "regretting that disinterestedness and liberality were qualities little appreciated among dealers and speculators." These are haughty words. If Romney imagined that he had only to paint, and the Boydells only to pay, he took a selfish view of the situation of those worthy and generous men. They were tradesmen, and high-minded ones, and never for a moment assumed the airs of patrons of art, farther than their extensive dealings as print-sellers enabled them to aid it. Under any circumstances it was not unnatural to desire to gain rather than lose by speculations which supported art, and put money into the pockets of painters.

Of those poetic works of Romney much was said at the time, and not a little written; and critics were not wanting who questioned his intimacy with Shakespeare, if they did not doubt his talents. Among the latter was Lord Thurlow, a nobleman who alternately displayed the most refined courtesy and kindliness of manner, and a caustic spleen and rough asperity which made him dreaded as much as he was loved. In one of his rougher moods Thurlow said, "Romney, before you paint Shakespeare, do for God's sake read him."—"A good advice," says Hayley, who was seldom displeased with anything that a great man said. Carwardine, a pleasant and good friend, made the following memorandum of a conversation which he held with his Lordship on this very subject. It is dated, London, Nov. 10th, 1787. "Lord Thurlow. 'What! is Romney at work on Shakespeare? He cannot paint in that style; it is out of his way: by God, he will make a balderdash business of it!'—Carwardine. 'Your Lordship does not yet thoroughly know

Mr. Romney: for he has such a native modesty, that it prevents his showing before your Lordship his real powers.' —Lord Thurlow. 'Have you seen his design?'—Carwardine. 'No; he shows it to no mortal yet.'—Lord Thurlow. 'I should be glad to talk to him about it; bring him to dine with me to-day.'" Away Carwardine posted to the painter, and said, "Romney, I have been talking to the Chancellor about you and your great picture: he says you cannot paint from Shakespeare."—Romney. "Does he? I should be glad to talk to him about it; for he has some grand ideas in his gloomy head."—Carwardine. "I rejoice to hear you say so. You shall talk with him to-day; for you are already engaged to dine with him."—Romney. "Are you in earnest? But I cannot go."—Carwardine. "But you must go: it is the happiest incident for your grand work that could have arisen." In short, this able negotiator talked the painter into proper spirits; carried him off to the Chancellor's dinner-table; and the great picture from "The Tempest" was debated with warmth and spirit till ten in the evening. It was on this occasion that the Chancellor advised the study of the head of an English nobleman for that of Prospero. Romney examined the character of the countenance, in the company of Hayley, and both pronounced it unsuitable. The modest poet, however, did not leave his friend in the lurch—he suggested the substitution of his own.

To an aid of a softer kind many have imputed the chief charms of Romney's best pictures. "He had the great advantage," says Hayley, "of studying the features and mental character of a lady, on whom nature has lavished such singular beauty, and such extraordinary talents, as have rendered her not only the favourite model of Romney, whom she honoured with her filial tenderness and esteem, but the idolized wife of an accomplished ambassador." This fascinating dame was that Emma Lyon, destined in a future day, as Lady Hamilton, to exercise such injurious influence over the illustrious Nelson. Her personal loveliness was wonderful; and in her youth she took her beauty freely to the market of art—exposing her charms without reserve, and so lavishly, that they have found their way

into most pictures of that period. Princes and peers contended for copies of her shape and looks, in many attitudes, and many various characters, till the lines of Pope were more than realized:—

> "How many pictures of one nymph we view,
> All how unlike each other—all how true!
> Arcadia's Countess here in ermined pride,
> Is there Pastora by a fountain side;
> Here, Fannia leering on her own good man;
> And there, a naked Leda with a swan."

Painters flattered her by all manner of deification; poets were equally busy; and such homage was paid, that no wonder the woman grew giddy and vain. As it was, to say the truth, the "Fair Emma," as Hayley constantly calls her, seems to have borne herself more becomingly than either our painter or his friend the poet; both of whom seem to have been absolutely sick about her. "Her features," says Hayley, "like the language of Shakespeare, could exhibit all the feelings of nature, and all the gradations of every passion, with a most fascinating truth and felicity of expression. Romney delighted in observing the wonderful command she possessed over her eloquent features; and, through the surprising vicissitudes of her destiny, she ever took a generous pride in serving him as a model. One of his earliest fancy pictures, from this animated model, was a whole-length of Circe with her magic wand."

Another was a Sensibility, of which Hayley thus gives the origin:—"During my visit to Romney, in November, 1786, I happened to find him one morning contemplating a recently-coloured head, on a small canvas. I expressed my admiration of his unfinished work in the following terms:—'This is a most happy beginning: you never painted a female head with such exquisite expression: you have only to enlarge your canvas, introduce the shrub mimosa growing in a vase, with a hand of this figure approaching its leaves, and you may call your picture a personification of Sensibility.'—'I like your suggestion,' replied the painter; 'and will enlarge my canvas immediately.'—'Do so,' I answered, with exultation; 'and I will hasten to an eminent nurseryman at Hammersmith, and bring you the most

beautiful plant I can find.'" The poet coveted the possession of the picture which he thus had helped to create. He obtained it curiously. A gentleman, whose estate lay contiguous, took a fancy to one of Hayley's farms, and desired to buy it. "If you will pay a fair and full market price for the land, according to the valuation of an uninterested person," said this most prudent of all the sons of song, "and purchase and present to me 'The Sensibility' of Romney besides, the land shall be yours." The terms pleased; and both money and picture were presently in the hands of Hayley.

In order that he might have command of time, for the counsels of Hayley, and the charms of Emma, Romney now lessened the number of his sitters for portraits; admitted no one before noon; and laboured with such diligence, that his health began to be affected. His want of pictorial power of mind compelled him to have living models for what fancy refused to supply. He had no Cassandras, or Magdalens, or Mirandas, in his imagination; he saw them through the looks of Emma Lyon; and as that lady was much in request, the sensitive painter had often, in her absence, to lament the attraction of the very charms which were giving his pictures half their fame. After an absence, which reduced him to despair, the fair Emma surprised him one day by an early visit, attired in a splendid eastern dress, and attended by Sir William Hamilton. "This seasonable incident raised," says Hayley, "to joyous elevation the sinking spirits of the artist. Romney had ever treated her with the tenderness of a father; which she acknowledged on this occasion with tears of lively gratitude, in announcing to him her splendid prospect of being soon married to Sir William, and attending him to the court of Naples." This raised the spirits of the painter, indeed;—hear how he talks to Hayley in June, 1791.

"At present, and the greatest part of the summer, I shall be engaged in painting pictures from the divine lady: I cannot give her any other epithet, for I think her superior to all womankind. I have two pictures to paint of her for the Prince of Wales. She says she must see you

before she leaves England, which will be in the beginning of September. She asked me if you would not write my life; I told her you had begun it: then, she said, she hoped you would have much to say of her, in the life, as she prided herself in being my model." He writes, in July, to the same person, in the same strain. "I dedicate my time to this charming lady; there is a prospect of her leaving town with Sir William for two or three weeks. They are very much hurried at present, as everything is going on for a speedy marriage; and all the world following her; and talking of her: so that, if she had not more good sense than vanity, her brain must be turned. The pictures I have begun are, Joan of Arc, a Magdalen, and a Bacchante, for the Prince of Wales; and another I am to begin as a companion to the Bacchante."

In a few days, however, we find our too susceptible artist fallen from this ecstatic state, and complaining to Hayley of lost esteem, and sittings promised, but not given. "I informed you," he writes, "that I was going to dine with Sir William and his lady. In the evening there were collected several people of fashion, to hear her sing. She performed both in serious and comic to admiration, both in singing and acting; but her Nina surpasses everything I ever saw, and, I believe, as a piece of acting, nothing ever surpassed it. The whole company were in an agony of sorrow. My mind was so much heated, that I was for running down to Eartham, to fetch you up to see her. But, alas! soon after I thought I discovered an alteration in her conduct to me. A coldness and neglect seemed to have taken place of her repeated declarations of regard. They left town to make many visits in the country. It is highly probable that none of the pictures will be finished. You will see everything is in great uncertainty."

Now was the poet's time to try and soothe into sweetness the mood of this whimsical beauty: and of the force of the magic which he essayed the reader may judge. "I sent him," said Hayley, "the following rhymes; entreating him to transcribe and present them to the lady, with his own signature:—

"'Gracious Cassandra, whose benign esteem
To my weak talent every aid supplied,
Thy smile to me was inspiration's beam,
Thy charms my model, and thy taste my guide.
But say, what cruel clouds have darkly chill'd
Thy favour, that to me was vital fire?
Oh, let it shine again! or, worse than kill'd,
Thy soul-sunk artist feels his art expire.'"

Before, however, this poetic gramoury could be put to proof, the impatient painter threw a spell of his own, which restored smiles to the face of Emma. He thus announces his project and its success to Hayley:—"Cassandra came to town on the 16th, and I did not see her till the 20th, so you may suppose how my feelings must have suffered. When she came to sit on the 23rd, she seemed more friendly than she had been; and I *began a picture of her as a present to her mother*. I was very successful with it: it is thought the most beautiful head I have painted of her yet. Now, indeed, I think she is as cordial with me as ever; and laments very much that she is to leave England without seeing you. I take it excessively kind in you to enter so deeply into my distresses. Really, my mind had suffered so very much, that my health was much affected, and I was afraid I should not have had power to have painted any more from her; but since she has resumed her former kindness my health and spirits are quite recovered. She performed in my house last week, singing and acting before some of the nobility, with most astonishing powers." This lady, on whose good looks the painter's fame so greatly depended, and whose smile restored his health and spirits, soon after sailed, with her doting ambassador, to the congenial court of Naples, where, if none of the fair dames had voices as sweet, and forms as enchanting, many of them were in other respects fit associates for Cassandra.

In the midst of those innumerable designs after Lady Hamilton for the galleries and chambers of princes and noblemen, the painter had taken advantage of an excursion which his model made into the country, to go to Paris, accompanied by his friend, and now constant comrade, Hayley. This visit occurred during those momentous

days which abounded in magnificent promises of good to the world; before yet the splendid vision of Liberty and Equality had vanished in a shower of blood. The British ambassador, Earl Gower (afterwards Marquess of Stafford), the friend of all men of genius, made their access easy to works of art and the company of the scientific and ingenious. A short poem from the pen of Hayley opened the doors of Madame de Genlis. Romney was highly pleased with the sprightly and benevolent lady; and not a little charmed with the engaging disciples of both sexes, who were her companions. On her coming to London afterwards, he drew a very hasty, but accurate sketch of her animated features. Of the living artists of France, he chiefly admired David, and was often in his company: that too-eminent member of the detested Jacobin Club had not then dipped his hands in innocent blood; nor called out, in the language of the studio, when he desired to give the guillotine employment, "Let us grind enough of *red*." Of this journey I find nothing else worthy of remembrance.

The year 1792 was saddened by the death of Reynolds, who, however, it will be remembered, had for some time before ceased to be the professional rival of any one. There is no evidence of any serious feud having ever occurre betwee Romney and him; therefore, no formal reconciliation was looked for or necessary: but that they disliked each other there can be no doubt. I am not certain that the coming of Romney, which was so unpleasant to the President, was not the most beneficial event that could have happened. The harvest of portraiture, which, before that time, he had reaped alone, did not afterwards entirely employ him, and he found leisure to execute many of those splendid domestic paintings, which give him a twofold claim on the admiration of posterity. The serenity, prudence, and wisdom, which Nature gave so largely to Reynolds, she denied to Romney. The sensitive imagination of the latter maintained a war with his happiness; the hostility of a critic, or the coldness of a friend struck him powerless. "What can be more truly pitiable," says one of his biographers, "than to see great talents frequently

rendered inactive by those wonderful variations in the nervous system that throw a shadowy darkness over the mind, and fill it with phantoms of apprehension?" The death of Reynolds quickened the ambition of Romney: he was now advancing into the vale of years; his health, at all times unequal, he now felt to be much impaired; and he earnestly resolved to employ the days which yet remained on works that might be worthy of remembrance when he was gone. He had sent his "Cassandra" to the Shakespeare Gallery; his "Calypso" and "Magdalen" were ready to go home to the Prince; and his "Maid of Orleans" —perhaps the finest head he ever painted—awaited but the finishing touch, in that often-expected season when the mind and hand were to act in perfect unison, and produce works worthy of lasting fame.

In the midst of these noble resolutions he saw Thomas Paine, whose name, as the author of "The Rights of Man," and "The Age of Reason," has been heard far and near; and was persuaded, by a believer from Manchester, to paint his portrait. "It is one of the finest heads," says the Rev. John Romney, "ever produced by pencil, both for professional skill and physiognomical expression. The character is simple, but vulgar; shrewd, but devoid of feeling." It is much more—it expresses deep, and almost scowling, malignity; did a painter desire to limn the looks of a fiend of the lowest order, he might adopt those of the arch-apostle of misrule. How diabolic is the face of Paine, compared with that of the pious and gifted Cowper, which the painter considered one of the best of his works! Here is learning, with benevolence and genius—

"In it dwells no relentless wrath against the human race."

The conversation of Cowper, and the persuasions of Hayley, induced Romney to seek in Milton for fitting subjects for his pencil; he had already produced a picture from his domestic life—"Milton and his Daughters"—now in the gallery of Mr. Whitbread. This painting has been praised in both prose and verse. The subject, too, had charms for the unhappy Barry: painters are fond of

measuring their strength, more frequently than fairly, with one another.

The difficulty which art encounters in this land, of aiding its conceptions from the living model, was often felt by Romney: and never more than now, when he dedicated so much of his time to works of an historical nature. In order to remedy this as far as possible, he sent a hundred pounds to Flaxman, to purchase for him a number of the finest casts which could be found in Rome; and as the poetic taste of his friend was undoubted, a splendid consignment came to hand. "I have spent three months in collecting them," writes the sculptor to his brother artist; "some I have had moulded from the antique on purpose; and I think I have sent you the cream of the finest things in Rome, as far as the money would go. There is a group of Laocoön and his sons—the Apollo Belvidere—groups of Castor and Pollux—of Cupid and Psyche—Apollo the lizard-killer—the relief on the Borghese vase—the destruction of Niobe's family—several busts—and the best fragments of legs and arms which I could find." Romney, when he received these, soon discovered that he wanted a studio, where his treasures might find sanctuary, and himself room for executing a series of splendid pictures, which at present lay embodied in his fancy. This structure he determined to build within a few miles of London; and true to the character assigned him by Hayley, of obeying impulses, he forthwith purchased the ground, lined out the site, and began to draw the plans. He was neither the first nor the last of our eminent artists whose love of bricks and mortar proved a source of amusement to their friends, and of disquietude to themselves.

His mind teemed now, and indeed at all times, with magnificent designs. He thus discloses his intentions to Hayley, in February, 1794:—"I had formed a plan of painting the 'Seven Ages,' and also of the 'Visions of Adam with the Angel'—to bring in the 'Flood and the Opening of the Ark,' which would make six large pictures. Indeed, to tell you the truth, I have made designs for all the pictures; and very grand subjects they are. My plan is, if I live and retain my senses and sight, to paint six

other subjects from Milton—three where Satan is the hero, and three from Adam and Eve;—perhaps six of each. I have ideas of them all, and I may say sketches: but, alas! I cannot begin them for a year or two; and if my name was mentioned, I should hear nothing but abuse, and that I cannot bear. Fear has always been my enemy; my nerves are too weak for supporting anything in public." Several events occurred this season which shook the nerves of Romney. Gibbon, whom he knew and esteemed, died unexpectedly, exclaiming "Mon Dieu—bon Dieu!" and Cowper, whom he loved next to Hayley, was once more overwhelmed with that fatal dejection of spirit which at length darkened down into hopeless insanity. On receiving, however, information that the poet of "The Task" was reviving, he spoke of mental decay in terms too moving to have been forgotten when the same cloud descended upon himself. "If there is a blessing in nature above all others, it is when a man recovers his lost reason; and if there is a situation more deplorable than any other in nature, it is the horrible decline of reason, and the derangement of that power we have been blest with. How hard it is for a man with a feeling mind to preserve that balance in his understanding that carries him well through life! Bless all those who dedicate their time to the weakness of the human mind!" A visit to the Isle of Wight, and a journey afterwards into Hampshire, were expected to brace his nerves and lighten his spirit. But these contributed less to restore him than a fortunate meeting with Warton the poet, who bestowed such praise on his cartoons in chalk, illustrating the "Persæ" of Æschylus, that he became for a time another man. The return, however, of Flaxman, whose genius he had perceived, and whose future eminence he predicted, seems to have cheered him more than all besides.

Even the sight of a fine painting relieved, for the time, the artist of his despondency. Hayley one day discovered a Corregio and a Salvator Rosa at Teddington; and hastening to the painter, who lay sick in his chamber at Hampstead, told him of the treasure. By gentle persuasion and courteous force, he decoyed him into a coach, and drove off

to Teddington; where a cup of coffee from a lady's hand, and the two masterly pictures, restored him at once. He brightened up; was gay, lively; and afterwards declared, that though half dead in the morning, he had never passed a more delightful day.

If we inquire concerning the mental fruit of all these days of sorrow and solicitude, we shall be told of abundance of great designs begun, and but few happily ended —of portraits enow of the beautiful, the rich, and the titled—but next to none of men of genius, by the delineation of whose features and minds alone a portrait-painter has much chance to reach posterity. He placed, indeed, a picture of "Titania and the Indian Votaress" in the elegant but frail fabric of Fonthill; and another fancy work, of no small merit—"Titania with her Fairies shooting at Bats with bows and arrows"—in the Egremont gallery at Petworth. I may add to these "The Death of Ophelia," and that of Susan, from the fine ballad of

"'Twas when the seas were roaring."

Neither of these, however, was finished; and the same may be said of a second Titania—a fine naked figure, reposing, fairy-like, in her bower, with honest Bottom slumbering at her side. His "Newton making Experiments with the Prism" was painted as a companion to "Milton and his Daughters," which it resembled in simplicity and domestic character more than in the serene loftiness of look which is visible in the great poet. There is a silly laugh of wonder on one girl's face, when she sees the prismatic colours projected on the wall; the other girl is in shadow, and holds a caraff of water in her hand, in which a sunbeam is playing. The painter, when feeble of body and depressed in mind, desired to alter the air of the philosopher's head; he began, but could not proceed, and so the picture remains. Hayley, Cumberland, and Bishop Watson,[1] urged Trinity College, Cambridge, to purchase it.

[1] Romney had painted a portrait of Watson, standing in his laboratory in 1769, when he was professor of chemistry at Cambridge. It is stated in the Cunningham MSS. that when Hayley published his life of Romney, Watson wrote to him—"I had little acquaintance with Romney

They answered, "We have Roubiliac's statue, and that is sufficient:"—perhaps it is.

The year 1797 was unpropitious to Romney, both as a man and an artist. A strange new studio and dwelling-house, which he planned and raised at Hampstead, had an influence on his temper, his studies, and his health. His mind teemed with new projects in art—works almost too colossal for his genius; and he imagined that his house in Cavendish Square was much too small for the paintings which he contemplated. He was a lover, indeed, of fantastic buildings; and in his hours of leisure pleased himself with planning houses and galleries, all for his own accommodation, and the advantage of art. Hayley, who seems to have had little faith in his skill in the management of bricks and mortar, advised him to consult an architect; he did so, and had his ideas reduced into working order—so little, however, to his satisfaction, that he soon dismissed his assistant, and commenced architect for himself. His success was such as might have been looked for: he spent nearly a year in superintendence, expended some £2,733, and raised an odd and whimsical structure, in which there was nothing like domestic accommodation; though there was a wooden arcade for a riding-house in the garden, and a very extensive picture and statue gallery. The moment the plasterers and joiners had ceased working, before the walls were even half-dry, this impatient man of genius bade farewell to Cavendish Square, after a residence there of twenty-one years; and, arranging his pictures and statues in his new gallery, and setting up his easels for commencing the historical compositions for which all this travail had been undergone, imagined that a new hour of glory was come.

A new hour had indeed come, but it was of a darker kind.

To those not intimate with Romney, he still appeared vigorous in frame and strong in mind, and likely to reach

as a man; and there were some traits in his character which had been reported to me that deterred me from cultivating an intimacy with him. But these matters may probably have been misrepresented to me."—Ed.

an advanced age in full possession of all his faculties. He was now some sixty-four years old, had acquired a high name, was rich enough to please himself in his mode of life, and master of his own time, and of a gallery which combined the treasures of ancient art with some of the best of the modern. All that seemed wanting now was for the painter to dip his brush in historical colours, and give a visible existence to some of those magnificent pictures with which his imagination teemed. He set up his easels, put his colours in order, and then, stretching himself on a sofa, gazed down upon London, which, with its extensive roofs and numerous domes and spires, lay far and wide before him. The old demon of nervous dejection had waited for the moment of apparent satisfaction, and opening glory, to stoop once more on his prey. Hayley heard of his condition; and, though needing consolation himself, from the illness of a promising son, he hastened to see him. "I found Romney," says the poet, "much dejected in his new mansion on the hill of Hampstead for want of occupation and society. I advised him to employ himself a little with his pencil, and offered to sit to him merely for his amusement. He began a head, the first attempted in his new painting-room; and, though his hand shook a little, yet he made a very creditable beginning, and thus pleased himself. The next morning he advanced his sketch more happily; as the very effort of beginning to work again, under the encouragement of an old friend, seemed to have done him great good." The poet failed to perceive that his mental strength was impaired, and that even his skill of hand had partly forsaken him. That love of whimsical buildings, of which in his latter days he had given various proofs—his desire, often and anxiously reiterated, for a more extended space than Cavendish Square afforded for displaying the powers of his genius in—these may be considered as signs that his mind, like a watch, when the balance-wheel is wrong, was running through the hours of existence at random. "There is a certain dignity," says Henry Mackenzie, "in retiring from life at a time when the infirmities of age have not sapped our faculties." But who shall point out this happy time?

A man of genius does not, and his friends will not, perceive or acknowledge any general symptoms of decay; and it is not till the world at large has, by unequivocal signs, announced its perception of the sad truth, that he is admonished to retire. Hayley perceived, after many a visit given and returned, much admonition expended, and much time consumed, in attempting to restore order to the chaos of his manifold works, that both mind and man were sinking.

Romney still lingered, brush in hand, on Hampstead Hill; his powers of conception, and his skill in execution, had sunk five or six points in the scale of excellence; but it was fondly hoped that some sudden emotion or happy incident would restore him. He dashed in, with a trembling and uncertain hand, a scene from Macbeth; half-painted a portrait of himself with spectacles on; complained of a swimming in his head, and a paralytic numbness in his right hand; and then renounced the brush for ever. It was more than time. His son had observed, the previous year, that, though he was become more corpulent and looked more healthy, the energy of his mind was impaired; and in the month of April, 1799, when Hayley visited him for the last time at Hampstead, he had the "grief of perceiving that his weakness of body and mind afforded only a gloomy prospect for the residue of his life."

The summer of 1799 came; but Romney could neither enjoy the face of nature, nor feel pleasure in his studio and gallery. A visible mental languor sat upon his brow—not diminishing, but increasing; he had laid aside his pencils; his swarms of titled sitters, whose smiles in other days rendered passing time so agreeable, were moved off to a Lawrence, a Shee, or a Beechey; and thus left lonely and disconsolate among whole cart-loads of paintings, which he had not the power to complete, his gloom and his weakness gathered and grew upon him. Hayley was at a distance, and came not; and as the sinking man was considered as a sort of enemy or rival to the Royal Academy, few of its members appeared to soothe or cheer him. In these moments his heart and his eye turned towards the north,—where his son, a man affectionate and kind, resided; and

where his wife, surviving the cold neglect and long estrangement of her husband, lived yet to prove the depth of woman's love, and show to the world that she would have been more than worthy of appearing at his side, even when earls sat for their pictures, and Lady Hamilton was enabling him to fascinate princes with his Calypsos and Cassandras. Romney, without imparting his intentions to any one, departed from Hampstead; and taking the northern coach, arrived among his friends at Kendal in the summer of 1799. The exertion of travelling, and the presence of her whom he once had warmly loved, overpowered him; he grew more languid and more weak; and finding fireside happiness—to which all other human joy is but casual or weak—he resolved to remain where he was; purchased a house, and authorized a sale of that on Hampstead Hill, which had cost him so much in peace and purse.

In describing the latter days of this distinguished artist, I adopt the words of Hayley. "He retired to Kendal, where he had the comfort of finding an attentive, affectionate nurse in a most exemplary wife, who had never been irritated to an act of unkindness, or an expression of reproach, by his years of absence and neglect." On this subject the son of the painter is all but silent; it was indeed a delicate matter which he had to handle in speaking of the conduct of his parents. But though he condescends to say little, candour must interpret the little he says, to the advantage and the honour of their memories; and I most gladly do so. It would have been as well, nevertheless, if he had said something in confirmation of the words quoted from Hayley, of whose narrative, as far as concerns the early estrangement of his father from his mother, he speaks with some resentment. The reverend biographer, perhaps, means we should understand from his memoir, that no serious estrangement had ever taken place; and that as Romney had paid the wife of his bosom two visits in the course of thirty years, his final return to her society required no explanation, further than his illness, and is to be received as a matter of course. I am the more anxious on this point, because I hold that, in proportion as a man's works are worthy of notice, so is his conduct as a

man worthy of being known. I can never consent to look upon a man of genius as a mere holder of a pen or pencil, of whom nothing further than how he placed his writing-desk, or mixed up his palette, deserves to be noted. This would be paying a poor compliment to genius; but the world wisely demands to know as much as possible of the characters of its benefactors, and all biographers worthy of the name have striven to obey in this respect the dictates of natural good sense and feeling.

Sinking in mind and body, as the painter was, he continued to correspond with Hayley—sometimes drew a little in crayons—and walked out in the sunshine. In his letters he spoke of the attentions of his wife with the tenderest gratitude; expressed a hope that he should soon be gladdened by the return of his brother, Colonel Romney, from the East Indies; and on hearing that Lady Hamilton had come to England, and wished to see him, he replied in these words: "The pleasure I should receive from a sight of the amiable Lady Hamilton would be as salutary as great; yet I fear, except I should enjoy more health and better spirits, I shall never be able to see London again. I feel every day greater need of care and attention; and here I experience them in the highest degree." This was written 13th December, 1800; and Romney, though failing fast, was still sensible of the kindness of his friends, and willing to cheer himself as he best might. The scene suddenly changed: Colonel Romney arrived, and hastened to his brother, to whom he was much attached. He found him helpless in body, and so much weakened in memory and mind, that he could with difficulty recall him to recollection. "Brother," he said, "do you not know me?" Romney looked eagerly in his face, burst into an agony of tears—half articulated some words of recognition, —and then, and for ever, forgot him and all else that loved him in the world. He sunk into helpless imbecility; and, without pain or consciousness, *breathed* till the 15th of November, 1802, when he had nearly completed his sixty-eighth year. He died at Kendal, and was buried at Dalton, where he was born.

In person, Romney was tall and strong; his shoulders

inclined to the round; his features were broad and manly —his hair dark—his eyes, large, quick, and discerning. He used to say, he considered that sensibility lay in the muscles of the lips; his own, Hayley remarks, quivered with emotions of pity at the sight of distress, or at the relation of a pathetic story. His feelings were so perilously acute, that they misled him into many frailties; and this extreme sensibility is the charm which Hayley employs to screen him from all charges affecting him, whether as a man or as an artist. His deep sensibility prevents him from painting well anywhere save in solitude; his nervous sensibility hinders him from treating with the silent dignity of contempt the studied injuries of criticism; and his extreme sensibility respecting professional eminence induces him to desert his wife and his children, and tempt the manifold perils of London. Sensibility, it is plain, cannot bear the blame of all this; for sensibility respects the obligations of love or of wedlock, and would not advise us to forsake the wife of our bosom, nor the children that blessed the nuptial bed. Truth compels utterance to so much; but if we could pass over this grievous error, there appears nothing in the character of Romney which is unworthy of his genius. He was kind, generous, and upright; ready to feel for the poor and the humble, and as ready with his purse; he was ever willing, too, to oblige his friends; and painted portraits of all men of any rank, without much entreaty or wish of emolument. He was likewise kind and indulgent to all young artists; it is to the honour of his discernment, that he was among the first to perceive the dawning genius of Flaxman; and to the honour of his heart, that he was his friend when friends were few: and it is to the honour of both, that they cordially loved one another; and not only have in their letters, but in their professional works, left many proofs of their mutual affection and esteem. Flaxman says, "I always remember Mr. Romney's notice of my boyish years and productions with gratitude: his original and striking conversation; his masterly, grand, and feeling compositions are continually before me; and I still feel the benefits of his acquaintance and recommendations."

Romney not having had the advantage of a regular education, Cumberland, in consequence, considered him as next to illiterate; and we have seen that a Lord Chancellor accused him of not having read even Shakespeare. His various works, however, betray no deficiency in knowledge of either history or poetry: indeed, a great painter must necessarily be something of an instructed man; and with regard to Shakespeare, he has nowhere misinterpreted, though he may have fallen a little below him—as who has not? It surely cannot expose a man of eminence to the imputation of being ignorant of his country's first poet, that he has not studied his pages with the scientific anxiety of a Kemble or a Garrick. Cumberland, again, talks of the vulgarity of his friend's conversation; and imputes this defect, in a great degree, to his being shut out from intercourse with the titled and the great. What was the dramatist himself about, during all his long intercourse with Romney? He was a teacher of manners, and ought to have drilled his rustic associate into the ways of the great: surely, some passable shadow of politeness, both of tongue and of manners, might soon have been acquired, if a man of such talents considered it worth the trouble. But the truth is, that Cumberland, in respect to this part of his story, is manifestly mistaken. The very profession in which Romney excelled, and in which he was the rival of Reynolds, gave him abundant access to, nay, even forced on him, the company of the high and the courtly. The numerous portraits which he painted are a sufficient proof of this; and, were other proof wanting, his letters would furnish it. He was the frequent guest of some of the noblest in the land; and, moreover, his works, uniting portrait and history, brought all lovers of art to his studio: he mixed, I fancy, as much as any of his order, except Reynolds, with men of rank and fashion. Flaxman, we have shown, praises his original and striking conversation; and surely the applause of one at once so wise and so virtuous would, at any time, weigh such a testimony as that of Cumberland down. And yet we must not forget that the latter himself says, with unexpected candour—"When in company with his intimates, he would give vent to the effusions

of his fancy, and harangue in the most animated manner upon the subject of his art, with a sublimity of idea, and a peculiarity of expressive language, that was entirely his own, and in which education or reading had no share. These sallies of natural genius, clothed in natural eloquence, were perfectly original, very highly edifying, and entertaining in the extreme. They were uttered in a hurried accent, an elevated tone, and very commonly accompanied by tears, to which he was by constitution prone."

The works of Romney are of two kinds, history and portrait; in both of which he attained, in the eyes of many, great distinction, and, during his day, ranked with the foremost. There was, however, some truth, though more bitterness, in the saying of Fuseli, that Romney was made for the times, and the times for him. He certainly adopted or followed the fashion and feeling of his day more than a man who believes he is labouring for immortality ought ever to do. Nothing is immutable but nature: the fashion which we bow to to-day, we smile at to-morrow; and Romney's historical pieces have been greatly lowered in value by his non-attention to this. We offer no such reproach as to his portraits, in which, on the contrary, it is a charm to trace something like the fashion of their times, and in conformity with their manners. We ought to know at first sight the cavaliers of Charles from the roundheads of Cromwell.

Of this class of his works we have already named some; and may name a few more:—1. Flaxman modelling the bust of Hayley. 2. The Duke of Richmond. 3. The Earl of Westmorland. 4. Warren Hastings. 5. The Duke of Portland. 6. The Duke of Grafton. 7. Lord Melville. 8. The Margrave and Margravine of Anspach. 9. Mrs. Fitzherbert. 10. Lord Ellenborough. 11. Dr. Paley. 12. The Archbishop of Dublin. 13. The Archbishop of York. 14. Bishop Watson. 15. Lord Thurlow. 16. Mrs. Hodges (the frail). 17. John Wesley. 18. Mrs. Tighe. 19. Mrs. Rouse and Child. 20. Mrs. Billington. 21. Dr. Parr. 22. The Duchess of Cumberland. 23. Archbishop of Canterbury. 24. The Sons of Sir George Wynne. 25. Mrs. Jordan. 26. David Hartley, the British

minister for settling matters with America. 27. The Bishop of Salisbury. 28. Dr. Farmer, master of Emmanuel College. 29. William Pitt. 30. Earl of Chatham. 31. The two Miss Thurlows. 32. Lady Brownlow. 33. Lady Georgiana Smith and Child. 34. The Earl of Derby. 35. Dr. Porteus, Bishop of Chester. 36. Lady Augusta Murray. 37. The Countess of Sutherland (now Marchioness of Stafford). This list might be lengthened: and, undoubtedly, there appear such skill in drawing, such accuracy of delineation, and such clear and natural colouring in these portraits, as in a great measure justify the taste of those who crowded to his easel, and considered him as the rival of Reynolds, and the chief painter of the age. It may be considered as censure, that Flaxman, in his estimate —and a high one it is—of his genius, never so much as alludes to his almost innumerable portraits; works which brought him into notice, and provided the means of those studies in which alone the great sculptor perceived the true artist. The coat and waistcoat style, as it was called, had no charms for him, who looked on works of art with a severe and classic eye. In his portraits, Romney missed, certainly, the grace and ease, and the fine flush of colouring, which have brought lasting fame to Reynolds; and he wanted, moreover, his illustrious rival's exquisite prudence in handling the costume of the day, so as to soften down its capes, and cuffs, and buttons. There appear, however, traces of great dignity and manliness in all his heads—and, in some, a certain touch of poetic loftiness, of which Reynolds has furnished hardly an example.

His historical and domestic pictures, finished and unfinished, deserve a more minute examination; they embrace a wide range of reading and observation, and are numerous beyond all modern example. The extravagant laudations of Cumberland and Hayley might be accounted for by their personal affection for the man: they were both prodigiously vain; and might have thought that whatever their own chosen artist's pencil touched, rose at once into life, and beauty, and dignity. The admiration of the wise, good, and conscientious Flaxman is, however, entitled to far different consideration; and there can be no doubt

that he deemed Romney one of the noblest of all living painters.

"When Romney," he says, "first began to paint, he had seen no gallery of pictures, nor the fine productions of ancient sculpture: but then women and children were his statues, and all objects under the cope of heaven formed his school of painting. The rainbow, the purple distance, or the silver lake, taught him colouring; the various actions and passions of the human figure, with the forms of clouds, woods, and mountains, or valleys, afforded him studies of composition. Indeed, his genius bore a strong resemblance to the scenes he was born in: like them, it partook of the grand and beautiful; and like them, also, the bright sunshine and enchanting prospects of his fancy were occasionally overspread with mist and gloom. On his arrival in Italy, he was witness to new scenes of art and sources of study, of which he could only have supposed previously that something of the kind might exist: for he there contemplated the purity and perfection of ancient sculpture, the sublimity of Michael Angelo's Sistine Chapel, and the simplicity of Cimabue and Giotto's schools. He perceived those qualities distinctly, and judiciously used them in viewing and imitating nature; and thus his quick perception and unwearied application enabled him, by a two years' residence abroad, to acquire as great a proficiency in art as is usually attained by foreign studies of a much longer duration.

"After his return, the novelty and sentiment of his original subjects were universally admired. Most of these were of the delicate class; and each had its peculiar character. Titania, with her Indian Votaress, was arch and sprightly; Milton dictating to his Daughters, solemn and interesting. Several pictures of Wood Nymphs and Bacchants, charmed by their rural beauty, innocence, and simplicity. The most pathetic, perhaps, of all his works was never finished—Ophelia, with the flowers she had gathered in her hand, sitting on the branch of a tree, which was breaking under her, whilst the melancholy distraction visible in her lovely countenance accounts for the insensibility to her danger. Few painters have left so

many examples in their works of the tender and delicate affections; and several of his pictures breathe a kindred spirit with the Sigismonda of Correggio. His Cartoons, some of which have unfortunately perished, were examples of the sublime and terrible; at that time perfectly new in English art. As Romney was gifted with peculiar powers for historical and ideal painting, so his heart and soul were engaged in the pursuit of it, whenever he could extricate himself from the importunate business of portrait painting. It was his delight by day, and study by night; and for this his food and rest were often neglected. His compositions, like those of the ancient pictures and basso-relievos, told their story by a single group of figures in the front; whilst the background is made the simplest possible, rejecting all unnecessary episode and trivial ornament, either of secondary groups or architectural subdivision. In his compositions, the beholder was forcibly struck by the sentiment at the first glance: the gradations and varieties of which he traced through several characters, all conceived in an elevated spirit of dignity and beauty, with a lively expression of nature in all the parts. His heads were various—the male were decided and grand; the female, lovely: his figures resembled the antique—the limbs were elegant and finely formed: his drapery was well understood; either forming the figure into a mass with one or two deep folds only, or, by its adhesion and transparency, discovering the form of the figure, the lines of which were finely varied with the union or expansion of spiral or cascade folds, composing with or contrasting the outline and chiaro-oscuro. Few artists, since the fifteenth century, have been able to do so much in so many different branches: for, besides his beautiful compositions and pictures, which have added to the knowledge and celebrity of the English school, he modelled like a sculptor, carved ornaments in wood with great delicacy, and could make an architectural design in a fine taste, as well as construct every part of the building."

In the eulogium of Flaxman are read the sentiments of a fine judge; but we must, nevertheless, look upon it as the opinion of one more desirous to dwell on excellencies

than to point out defects. It was a great merit in the sculptor's eyes that Romney was enthusiastic about the ideal in art—that he was in raptures with the antique, and aimed at severe simplicity in his compositions. His ideas were often, indeed, original and striking; but, in communicating them to the canvas, he exhibited not a little of the deficiency visible in the productions of the great sculptor himself, viz. a certain air of heaviness in form, and want of grace and delicacy in workmanship, which detract seriously from the merit of the conception. Few artists of the present day would concur, without some abatement, in the high character which Flaxman has bestowed on the works of Romney. His ideal and historical pieces are numerous; and it may be safely said, that some of them are equal, in loftiness of thought, and in simplicity of conception, to any productions of that class in the British school. But it must not be concealed, that his *finished works* of that order are few. For one finely finished, there are five half done; and for five half done, there are at least a dozen merely commenced on the canvas. More seems to have been wanting than patronage: I cannot help suspecting that the painter was deficient in that creative power which enables men of the highest rank of genius to body forth their groups in imagination, and *completely fix* them before the mind's eye, even as a living person sits for a portrait. He seems, at least, to have yielded too much to the impulse of the moment—he was ever ready to begin a new subject, but exceedingly loath to finish an old one; and we are left to lament that so many conceptions of a high order are left in the crude elements of the art.

To fourteen pictures the charms of Lady Hamilton contributed their attractions:—1. Circe, a fascinating figure, but unaccompanied, as was intended, by her suitors metamorphosed to brutes: the painter could obtain no tractable models, and laid the work aside. 2. Iphigenia, a whole-length, unfinished. 3. St. Cecilia, bought by Mr. Montague Burgoyne for seventy guineas. 4. Sensibility, bought by Mr. Hayley for one hundred guineas. 5. Bacchante, a half-length, sent to Sir William Hamilton at Naples, and lost at sea returning. 6. Calope exposed with

her Child, bought by Admiral Vernon for sixty guineas. 7. The Spinstress, bought by Mr. Craven for one hundred and fifty guineas. 8. Cassandra, for the Shakespeare Gallery, for one hundred and eighty guineas. 10. A Bacchante, bought by Sir John Leicester for twenty-five guineas. 11. Calypso, and 12. Magdalene, for the Prince of Wales, two hundred pounds. 13. Joan of Arc, unfinished. 14. The Pythian Priestess, unfinished.

I shall enumerate a few more of those which he commenced and laid aside: they will show the range of his mind, and also his want of patience to render his works worthy of admission to public galleries. 1. A Naked Lady, caressing a Child; 2. Venus and Adonis; 3. Jupiter; 4. King Lear asleep; 5. King Lear awake; 6. Ceyx and Alcyone; 7. Medea; 8. The Death of Niobe's Children; 9. The Cumean Sibyl foretelling the destiny of Æneas; 10. Electra and Orestes at the Tomb of Agamemnon; 11. Thetis supplicating Jupiter (Iliad, book i.); 12. Thetis comforting Achilles (Id. book xviii.); 13. Una; 14. Hebe; 15. Psyche; 16. A Mother with her Child, flying from a city in flames; 17. Celadon and Amelia; 18. Damon and Musidora; 19. The Dying Mother; 20. Homer reciting his Verses; 21. David and Saul; 22. Macbeth and Banquo; 23. The Weird Sisters; 24. The Descent of Odin; 25. Fortune-telling; 26. The Ghost of Clytemnestra; 27. Eurydice vanishing from Orpheus; 28. Harpalice, a Thracian princess, defending her wounded Father; 29. Paris found dying by Mountain Nymphs; 30. Romney's Dream; 31. Gil Morrice; 32. Antigone with the dead Body of Polynices; 33. The Grecian Daughter; 34. Two Girls chasing a Butterfly; 35. A Witch displaying her magical Powers; 36. Resuscitation by force of Magic; 37. Doll Tearsheet—"Captain! thou abominable damned cheater," &c.; 38. The Birth of Man; 39. The Temptation of Christ. To these may be added the Cartoons which Flaxman admired so much: Cupid and Psyche; Orpheus and Eurydice; Prometheus chained; Medea; Ghost of Darius; and Atossa's Dream. Thirty-eight of his designs and studies were deposited by the painter's son in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, and the Cartoons

were presented by the same hand to the Liverpool Institution.

"I have made many grand designs; I have formed a system of original subjects, moral and my own, and I think one of the grandest that has been thought of—but nobody knows it. Hence it is my view to wrap myself in retirement and pursue these plans, as I begin to feel I cannot bear trouble of any kind." These were the words of Romney in March, 1794, but they apply to all periods of his life—he was ever dreaming and sketching. Much of this wandering of the fancy must be attributed to Hayley: the poet overwhelmed and distracted the painter by all manner of suggestions; when he had done painting Sensibilities and Serenas for bedrooms and books, they opened volumes of verse or history, and as the friend dictated the artist drew. But it is not always from the finest passages in poetry or the noblest in history that artists form the best and most striking pictures. They are often found, on trial by the pencil, to owe their chief charm to what art can find neither form nor colours to express. Fortunately for himself and the world, Romney, in the absence of his officious poet, became sensible that he had attempted subjects beyond the reach of his department; and laying such wild dreams aside, singled out occasionally homelier subjects, which, having affected his own fancy, and being embodied under the influence of genuine feeling, have secured a lasting and an honourable place to his name.[1]

[1] The immense amount that has been written about Romney has rendered it unnecessary for me to add much more in the shape of notes. Cunningham's ample life gives on the whole a faithful picture of this weak-minded man, and weak though charming artist. The whole story of his life might be written in the two words we so often find on the back of his unfinished pictures and sketches—"Left incomplete." He was never whole-hearted in anything, not even in vice; but by the glamour of sentiment, and a certain charm of manner that he possessed, he made it difficult both to himself and others to distinguish between his virtuous intentions and his faulty performances. Even Cunningham is more lenient to his failings than is his wont, for although he is sufficiently severe on his mean desertion of his wife, he glosses over his early relations with "the Fair Emma," and, like Hayley, makes no mention of her "inspiring" influence until the time when she was about to be married

to Sir William Hamilton, when probably it is true that she merely honoured her poor deluded painter with "filial tenderness and esteem."

Hayley's verses, beginning "Gracious Cassandra," though intended as a high-flown compliment to this Circe of the day, have, in fact, a bitter truth in them. What can be said of the "soul-sunk artist" who "feels his art expire" when he can no longer gain her "charms" for his model or her "taste" for his guide! His life is sadder in its success than those of Barry and Haydon and other aspiring artists in failure. Perhaps he might have done better if the world had not been so well pleased with him. He was a man of a susceptible, and, therefore, egotistic temperament, and the flattery he received, especially from Hayley, was fatal both to his character and his art. This flattery made him unwilling to submit to the dry drudgery of mechanical work, and thus it happens that some of his most charming fancies are recorded merely in slight sketches. It is strange to think that this facile artist should ever have been the rival of dear, honest, hard-working Sir Joshua. His portraits, as they now appear at our exhibitions on the same walls as those of Reynolds, look poor and meretricious in comparison with his, though it must be admitted that their grace and ease of execution lend them a wonderful charm.

It is difficult now to decide how much of this grace was due to the beautiful model from whom he so constantly painted. Among the engravings after Romney, exhibited at Burlington House last winter (1878), there were no fewer than twelve representations of Lady Hamilton under different characters, and many more could be added. "Lady Hamilton as Ariadne," "Lady Hamilton Spinning," "Lady Hamilton as Innocence," as "Contemplation," as "St. Cecilia," &c.; these are the subjects most frequently occurring in all catalogues of his works. Sir Joshua flattered all his sitters equally, for he saw them all by the aid of his imagination through a sort of poetic haze that softened the rough commonplace aspect of every-day; but Romney's poetry seems to have been only gained through the inspiration of one sitter, for many of his other portraits, especially those of men, are prosaic enough, and his women are simply *flattered*, not idealized in the least. Of course these remarks do not apply to such works as "Mrs. Robinson as Perdita," "Honoria Sneyd as Serena," but only to the general class of his portraits, which are, for the most part, weak and characterless, and entirely wanting in that air of refinement which Sir Joshua gave to all his sitters. The "exquisitely sensitive" Romney was, in fact, in spite of his maudlin sensibilities, made of coarser clay than homely Sir Joshua. "Yet, at one time," says Redgrave, "the President's studio was somewhat deserted, the street where he lived no longer crowded with carriages, the tide of fashion having ebbed away to his northern competitor in Cavendish Square." Robinson, as we have seen, reckoned Romney's income, in 1785, at £3,635, and for several years during the height of his practice he did not make much less. It is scarcely to be wondered at that even Sir Joshua's equanimity failed him with regard to "the man in Cavendish Square;" but Allan Cunningham's insinuations as to his keeping him out of the Royal Academy are as unfounded as most of his other innuendoes against Reynolds.—Ed.

RUNCIMAN.

ALEXANDER RUNCIMAN—a man, in his day, of great estimation, and whose works can never be considered as deficient in power and genius—was born in Edinburgh in the year 1736. Like Jamesone's before him, his father was an architect: and, as architecture in those days frequently called in the pencil to embellish its ceilings and its walls, he was, in a manner, nursed in the lap of art. When some six years old he began to make rude drawings; and before he was twelve had shown such a decided inclination to painting, that his father was induced to encourage him. Furnished with pencils, and brushes, and colours, he took to the fields; his first sketches were rocks, trees, and waterfalls: his friends perceived in those crude attempts a genius for landscape; and Runciman, at the age of fourteen, was placed in the studio of John and Robert Norris—the former of whom was, in the current language of his day, "a celebrated landscape painter." [1] His progress here was such as was to be looked for from one of the wildest enthusiasts that ever devoted themselves to the art; he seemed to live and breathe for painting alone. "Other artists," said one who had been his companion, "talked meat and drink, but Runciman talked landscape."

A strong love of art prevailed at that time in Scotland. Robert and Andrew Foulis, two eminent printers in Glasgow, established in that city an academy of the fine arts, where engraving, and modelling, and drawing were taught; where specimens of antique art were collected,

[1] It is stated by Fuseli that Runciman was first apprenticed to a coachmaker, under whom he acquired some practice with the brush, a facility of pencilling, and much mechanic knowledge of colour, before he had attained any correct knowledge of design.—Ed.

and aspirants of genius were invited to live and to study free of all expense. An establishment so generous was not likely to last long; but for a time its influence was powerful. A similar spirit existed in Edinburgh: nothing was talked of but Michael Angelo, the Sistine Chapel, and the grand style: the children of the easel rejoiced; and it was in the midst of these pleasant and palmy times that Runciman, renouncing the tutelage of Norris, commenced on his own account, and exhibited himself in landscape, in 1755.

He committed here an ordinary error: the pleasure of new-acquired freedom, and the desire of standing erect and alone, had tempted him, and prevailed. Many, indeed, applauded his paintings, and more his sketches; but applause is not food and raiment: there were few or none to purchase, and Runciman was obliged to console himself with the assurance of his admirers, "that his hour of fame was coming; and beautiful as his works now were, the day would arrive when their beauty would be such as to compel purchasers." He allowed himself to be comforted in the words afterwards adopted by a biographer, in relating his ill fortune. "These are, indeed, excellent; yet they are only the foreshadowings of future greatness, and an indication of that superlative merit you are yet to display in this branch of art."

With finer powers, at least bestowed on infinitely finer works, Wilson was starving amid the opulence and the patronage of London: no wonder that his fellow-adventurer of the North toiled in vain during five long years at Edinburgh. The great Englishman had, in leaving portraiture, forsaken fortune for fame; and the Scotsman, when he had discovered the barrenness of landscape, only turned to starve in a more conspicuous manner on historical composition. "The versatility of his talents," says one of his biographers, "did not permit him to be great only in one department. In 1760, his genius launched into the extensive regions of history painting, where, in delineating human passions, his energetic mind had greater scope than in portraying peaceful fields, the humble cottage, and the unambitious shepherd." These are, as

Fluellen says of the language of Ancient Pistol, as brave words as a man would wish to hear on a summer's day; but they must not disguise the fact of the artist's total failure in landscape, the first-born of his fancy.

To the new study of historical composition he, however, addressed himself with all the enthusiasm of hope; and being, according to the fashion of the time, fully persuaded that nothing could be done without a visit to Italy, he in the year 1766, at thirty years of age, set out on the great pilgrimage with a light purse and an exulting heart.[1] His language on this occasion was sufficiently lofty:—he would kneel before the Carracci, and make an obeisance to Raphael, and give at the shrine of genius what he withheld from that of St. Peter. If we may believe the opinion expressed by one of his biographers, he was well prepared to profit by his journey:—"He could, indeed, say, with the artist whose works he beheld, 'And I also am a painter,' as he had now practised at least twelve years, and had attained a proficiency which some would have thought precluded the necessity of going abroad. But he longed to converse in high vision with the shades of the illustrious dead, on the spot where once they lived."

In Rome it was his fortune to meet with Fuseli; and as they resembled each other in many things, indeed in most things except learning—of which Runciman was as inno-

[1] Runciman's younger brother, John Runciman, born 1744, accompanied him in this journey to Italy. He was a painter of considerable promise, and Fuseli writes of him as having excited much livelier expectations as an artist than Alexander Runciman during their stay together in Rome. John Runciman, however, went on to Naples, where, either from the effects of the climate or from constitutional delicacy, he died soon after his arrival. In one of the letters from Barry to Burke, while the former was in Rome, he tells of having met the Runcimans, and of having accompanied Alexander to Naples, when the news came to him of the illness of his brother. Unfortunately they arrived too late to see him alive. The Scottish Academy erected a monument to the two Runcimans at the Canongate Church, Edinburgh. It is strange that Allan Cunningham in this memoir should not mention the younger brother. A picture by him appeared at the International Exhibition in 1862, and several of his works, all dealing with great historical and biblical subjects, are mentioned by Redgrave. Some of them have been engraved. —Ed.

cent as the ordinary run of his brethren were then, and still continue to be—an immediate brotherhood commenced between them. The Scot was seven years older than the Swiss—had laboured longer in art—was of a gentler temper, and less imperious in conversation. In a more essential matter they came closer:—they were rivals in that unbridled licence of imagination, which introduced an air of inspired madness, and considerate extravagance, into the sublimest and sternest subjects on which they employed their pencils. They bear a remarkable resemblance to each other: their drawings—and in these they are both seen to most advantage—seem the work of the same hand and mind; they are distinguished by the same splendid freedom of outline—the same dashing mode of treatment—the same immoderate length of body and limb, and the same resolution of never doing a gentle action with ease, nor an heroic one without perilous straining and toiling. Most of these sketches of Runciman are youthful efforts, struck off in the early days of his enthusiasm, and must therefore claim priority of date over the works of Fuseli. How far the one influenced the other, it is now impossible to tell: it appears to me indeed more than likely that their works—though, like those of Beaumont and Fletcher, they might be united into one continued series—were the offspring of separate and uninfluenced study. Fuseli at least could have needed little either of precept or example to lead him into the walk which he adopted; for to him exaggeration was more natural than true decorum and nice propriety. Be that as it may, the resemblance between their works is very striking, and has been observed by our most eminent artists. In a letter which Fuseli wrote from Rome, he said, "I send this by the hands of Runciman, whom I am sure you will like; he is one of the best of us here."

He remained in Rome during five years, and practised his hand and eye, morning, noon, and night, in drawing from the antique, copying the best works of the great masters, and assiduous study of those paintings of an historic order which are scattered profusely through the Italian galleries. "By these means," says one of his

biographers, "he not only increased in facility and truth in drawing, but acquired new general principles, and a more refined and correct taste. His conceptions, too, could not fail of being still farther enlarged by the view of so many sublime works of genius. The art of composition, of such consequence in an historical painter, could only be thoroughly learned from attentively studying its principles, as they are exemplified in those scientific standards; and he caught, with such truth, the rich yet chastened style of colouring of the Venetian school, that he was allowed to excel, in this quality, all his competitors." In comparing the productions of Runciman with this friendly estimate of his improvement. it will however be found, that the demons of extravagance and exaggeration continued with him still. If the calm, majestic genius of Raphael pointed the true way to the sublime and the historic, the unbridled genius of Michael Angelo loosed the evil spirit which the other laid. It is true, that more consistency of story, more skilful grouping, and a chaster style of colouring, found their way into the works of Runciman—but still the original sin of the man was manifest—the love of perpetual motion, the double-double toil-and-trouble sort of action triumphed over all. He returned home in the year 1771; he came by the way of London, but saw nothing to tempt his stay in that City of Promise to genius, and so proceeded to Edinburgh, where he arrived in a fortunate hour.[1]

The national spirit broken almost by a series of mischances, and oppressed by the night-mare power of England, which lay heavy upon Scotland, deadening every limb, through the reigns of the two first Georges, recovered its original strength when a king of a mild and fatherly temper succeeded to the throne, and asserted its

[1] He had previously sent home his large picture of "Nausicaa at Play with her Maidens," painted during his stay in Rome, and usually considered his finest work. It was exhibited at the Free Society of Artists in Edinburgh in 1767. It might, however, have been painted, as Allan Cunningham says it was further on, for Sir J. Clerk of Pennycuick, for Runciman seems to have known this gentleman before he left Edinburgh.—Ed.

dignity in every department of science and speculation. Associations began to be formed for the furtherance of art; and the academy established in Edinburgh College, in the year 1760, showed promising symptoms of life and vigour. So far, however, had all knowledge of art sunk amongst the Scotch, that no native could be found worthy of being at the head of the infant establishment. It is true that Allan Ramsay, son of the poet, had shown, by both pen and pencil, that he inherited the genius of his family; but he had become painter to the king, and was settled in London. What could not be found at home was therefore to be sought abroad, and De la Cour and Pavillion, French artists of some skill in outline, successively filled the situation of Professor. The death of the latter had recently occurred, and immediately on Runciman's arrival, he was solicited to fill the vacant situation.

The salary—£120 per annum, I believe—was indeed small, yet it was sufficient for the independence of one whose wants were few: he accordingly accepted the place, and entered upon its duties with more enthusiasm, and, perhaps, with less patience, than their character required. Of his labours as a teacher much has been said; yet the fruits of his ministration, if his merits are to be so weighed, were neither very abundant nor very beautiful. It is true, that many of those who repair to such places mistake inclination for talent, and a vagrant impulse for a settled fitness of soul, and that from such clods of the valley nothing to reflect lustre on the hapless teacher can be expected: but this is the case with all academies; and we must leave the poverty of the Edinburgh school under the new professor to be accounted for as it may. Many sagacious and learned men, as we all know, have questioned in the general the propriety of all such institutions; and there can be no doubt either that they foster a rank crop of the loathsome weeds of mediocrity, or that true genius often flourishes the most when left to educate itself. But if there are to be academies at all, there can be little doubt that the professors ought to be distinguished for accuracy of knowledge, and elegance of taste—points in which,

it must be admitted, the strength of Runciman did not lie.

The patronage which the North extended to art in those days was far from ample; still works of genius found some generous patrons—among the best known of whom were Sir J. Clerk, of Pennycuick; and Mr. Robert Alexander, a merchant in Edinburgh. From Clerk, Runciman had already received some assistance during his Roman studies; and to Alexander he, among others, was indebted for so many acts of liberality, that one who knew the case well has said, "Scotland owes more to Robin Alexander for the countenance and support of rising genius, than to the whole body of her nobility." Historical painting had become the confirmed idol of Runciman since he had beheld the wonders of the Sistine; and he was no sooner settled in the North than he submitted the design of a great national work to Sir J. Clerk, namely, to embellish his hall at Pennycuick with a series of paintings from Ossian. This was agreed to at once. The poems ascribed to the blind old man of Morven were at that time in all the full-blown splendour of fame: the singular boldness of the style—the wildness of the imagery—the deep, heroic, and chivalrous feelings which they breathed, rendered them universal favourites; and when it is considered that a nation's vanity was involved in their history, and its character emblazoned on every page, no wonder that Scotland eagerly received and adopted what was announced as the offspring of her own cultivated genius, produced at a period when all other European nations were barbarians. The reigning wits of England meantime looked on with distrust or derision: Johnson, Goldsmith, Burke, Garrick, and all that coterie, together with Boswell,—whose national prejudices were as nothing to his worship of Johnson,—amused themselves with lampoons in prose or verse against Fingal, Temora, and the whole race of Celtic poems, whether epic or lyric.

When it was told that Pennycuick was to be adorned with a series of paintings from those works, and that the hall was to be called Ossian's Hall, the mirth of these unbelievers knew no bounds. Men of talent are, however,

seldom driven from their purpose by the malice of wit or the bitterness of humour. Runciman,—content to receive for truth what his own nation believed—read, studied, sketched, and imagined he saw in those effusions a series of fine historical subjects, such as would make the hall of Ossian a rival to the Sistine Chapel. And, supposing Ossian to be authentic, Runciman was right: the works of art with which a nation adorns herself should be from her own story; and to seek in Scottish poetry for his subjects was surely wiser far in a Scottish painter than to have recourse to the trite and hopelessly defunct mythology of Greece. The heroes, and spirits of heroes, and wild divinities of the Celtic bard, had, moreover, the recommendation of novelty; and, finally, whether some ancient Highlander did or did not produce the whole, or any particular passages, no man now disputes but that the pages of "Ossian" do abound in poetry of the highest order. Sir J. Clerk readily entered into the feelings and wishes of the painter; sketches were made and approved, scaffolds raised; and to work he accordingly went, with all the enthusiasm of one who believes he is earning an immortal name. But there is no work, however much it may be the offspring of one's own heart, that can be accomplished perhaps in the same spirit in which it was commenced. Men of taste, connoisseurs, patrons of the fine arts, were ready, with their dissonance of opinion, to excite pain in the mind of a sensitive artist: pain of mind was aggravated by pain of body; he had to lie so much on his back, while occupied with the ceiling of the hall, that his health failed; while, to add to other vexations, the searching spirit of inquiry and criticism began to sap more and more the lines of circumvallation within which Macpherson had intrenched himself; and that Fingal lived, and that Ossian sung, began to be doubted even among the Scotch. He painted on, nevertheless, and finished his very romantic undertaking.

There are twelve principal paintings, representing some of the finest passages of the poems: 1. Ossian singing to Malvina. "Daughter of the hand of snow, I was not so mournful and blind when Everallan loved me." 2. The

Valour of Oscar. "Behold, they fall before my son, like the groves in the desert when an angry ghost rushes through night, and takes their green heads in his hand. Cairbar shrinks from Oscar's sword, and creeps in darkness behind his stone. He lifted up his spear in secret, and pierced my Oscar's side." 3. The Death of Oscar. "We saw Oscar on his shield; we saw his blood around;—silence darkens every face; each turns his face and weeps;—the king strives to hide his tears." 4. Death of Agandecca. "Bring hither, says Starno, Agandecca to her lovely king of Morven. She came with red eyes of tears—she came with her loose and raven locks: Starno pierced her side with steel—she fell like a wreath of snow which slides from the rocks of Ronan." 5. The Hunting of Catholda. "Many a hero came to woo the maid, the stately huntress of Termoth wild: but thou lookest careless from thy steps, high-bosomed Strina Donna." 6. The Finding of Corban Cargloss. "Who art thou, voice of night, said Fingal? She tremblingly turned away: a moonbeam glittered on a rock;—in the midst stood a stately form, a swan with floating locks." 7. Golchossa mourning over Lamderg. "Three days she mourned beside her love." 8. Oina Morval. "In the hall I lay at night; soft music came to my ear; it was the Maid of Fuarfed wild, she raised the nightly song; for she knew that my soul was a stream that flowed at pleasant sounds." 9. Cormac attacking the Spirit of the Waters. "He rushed among the waves to find the son of the wind: three youths guide the bounding bark. He stood with the sword and shield. When the low-hung vapour past, he took it by the curling head, and searched its dark womb with his steel, the son of the wind forsook the air." 10. The Death of Cormac. "Why comest thou in thy arms to Temora, Cairbar of the gloomy brow? He passed on in his darkness, and seized the hand of the king. Cormac foresaw his death." 11. Scandinavian Wizards making Incantations. "Near is the circle of Loda with the stone of power, where spirits descend by night in dark-red streams of fire: *there*, mixed with the murmur of the waters, rose the voice of aged men; they call the forms of night to aid them in

their war." 12. Fingal engaging the Spirit of Loda. "The spirit of Loda shrieked, as, rolled into himself, he rose upon the wind." Such are the passages which this bold artist has endeavoured to embody: that of Agandecca is reckoned the best. It is commended for anatomical skill, as well as intrepidity of design.[1]

This was hailed as an original and a national work; and though deficient in that fine majesty which belongs to the epic in art, and imperfect too in drawing, and not more than natural in colour, it is without question entitled to be ranked with compositions of a poetic order. While engaged on this work, he painted "The Ascension" on the ceiling, over the altar of the Episcopal Chapel in the Cowgate of Edinburgh—a composition which he himself ranked next to "The Hall of Ossian;"—but which, speaking from recollection, I should say is at once wild and ungraceful.[2] He painted also "King Lear;" a picture in which his friends perceived all the poet's feeling and fire; and "Andromeda," which they compared for richness of colour to the works of Titian and Correggio. Patrons and critics have ever a ready way of summing up the leading

[1] An artist friend, who has seen Pennycuick Hall quite recently, writes to me that the ceiling is still in an excellent state of preservation, the colours looking almost as fresh as when first painted. The hall has been restored of late years, and the paintings may have been slightly touched up, but certainly have not been repainted to any damaging extent. They are executed in oil on the plaster, and have a very rich effect. In the centre is a large elliptical medallion showing Ossian with his harp, reciting his poem to a large number of people of all ranks and ages. Around this, in a beautiful framework of gold and leaves, are set the twelve designs Cunningham describes from Macpherson's wonderful poem.—ED.

[2] So others besides Cunningham appear to have thought, for Mr. Heath Wilson writes to me: "The Episcopal Chapel of St. Paul's in the Canongate, I remember, as a boy, being decorated with large paintings by Runciman on the walls of the apse. But the Episcopalians building a new chapel, St. Paul's was sold to the Presbyterians, who, when they took possession, whitewashed over all the pictures of their great countryman. The whitewash has now, I believe, been removed, but while criticizing the Italians for covering their great frescoes with whitewash, let me in justice reflect on this Scottish proceeding in this nineteenth century, which was accomplished without, as far as I know, exciting any protest or public indignation in a city which, at the time, called itself the 'Modern Athens.'"—ED.

merits of any new performance. Thus, in the picture of "The Princess Nausicaa and her Nymphs surprised at the river-side by Ulysses," which Runciman painted for Pennycuick, one judge perceived the "fine drawing" of Julio Romano; a second saw the "deep juicy lustre" of Tintoretto; and a third beheld "a feeling and an air altogether the painter's own." He prided himself much on his picture of "Agrippina landing with the Ashes of Germanicus;" a subject suggested by George the Third to Benjamin West.[1] He exhibited some pictures in London in the year 1772; but all that is remembered of him is, that he took up his quarters with the widow of Hogarth, who was in those days reduced to let lodgings for subsistence. He etched several of his own paintings: one of them, "Sigismunda weeping over the Heart of Tancred," is still in request with collectors. I inquired of a dealer in the article what its merits were? "It is five inches and a half by three inches and a quarter—a rare gem, I assure you, sir." Another of his etchings, "The Netherbow Port of Edinburgh," is in no common spirit and taste. The original picture has found a sanctuary in the fine collection of the Marquis of Stafford. Concerning his life, whatever more is known may be briefly added: the disorder contracted while painting the Pennycuick cupola grew worse and worse—his looks faded—he walked with difficulty—yet no one thought his hour was so nigh, when, on the 21st October, 1785, he dropped down at the door of his lodgings, in West Nicholson Street, and expired without a groan, in the forty-ninth year of his age.[2]

[1] It was not "Agrippina," but the "Departure of Regulus from Rome," that George III. suggested as a subject to West. Allan Cunningham's mistake on this point has been severely commented upon by his critics, who have not failed to point out that it was Tacitus, and not Livy, who gave an account of Agrippina. It was not, however, a very dreadful blunder to make, only the confusion was made worse confounded by Lockhart, who edited "The Family Library," adding a note at this place, to say that "Mr. West had represented his Majesty as reading the passage from Livy, not knowing that it was contained in one of the lost books of the historian!" Lockhart at all events ought to have known better.—Ed.

[2] The history of Runciman's life, with its great aims and disappointed hopes, is strangely like that of another young Scotch painter, David

Of the character of the painter as a man, and his merits as an artist, there are various opinions. A friend, in whose judgment I have much confidence, though inclined to be sarcastic, thus writes to me:—"My father was acquainted with Runciman, whose sketches, I think, are infinitely better than his pictures. Look at his etchings, and remember his gallery at Pennycuick, and then judge if I am severe—such long legs, such distorted attitudes, and such a total want of knowledge or contempt of drapery! I always thought I saw Runciman revived in Fuseli. My father said he was a dissolute, blasphemous fellow, and repeated some of his sayings, which are better forgotten than remembered. His mother was a most respectable, well-educated woman; her good sense and good manners made everybody admire her." A gentler picture is given by one of his biographers:—"He was remarkable for a candour and a simplicity of manners, and possessed a happy talent for conversation, which caused his company to be courted by some of the most eminent literary characters of his time. Hume, Robertson, Kames, and Monboddo, were among the number of his frequent visitors. But his real worth and goodness of heart were best known to his most intimate friends, who had access to him at all times. Nor was he less remarkable for his readiness in communicating information and advice to young artists, in order to further their improvement in the arts." These stories may seem inconsistent enough; Runciman, however, might live in social intercourse with divines and philosophers, and yet be wild in his conversation when among more lax companions; nay, he might indulge in many indiscretions of wit and humour without seriously wishing to insult the feelings of the devout, or impugn the Christian creed. But, surely, such themes are better avoided by men whose learning cannot enable them to go

"To the height of that great argument;"

Scott, whose story is told in vol. iii. The style of his art also, if Brown's account of it be correct, must have been of much the same character as that of the later artist, of whom it might also be affirmed that "his sketches were better than his pictures."—Ed.

and the wittiest of the wits would be wise in feeling with the poet, that

> "An atheist laugh's a poor exchange
> For Deity offended."

Concerning the merits of Runciman as a painter, there are, as we have said, sundry opinions. By those who have settled that we can have no true art without the nicest delicacy of academic drawing—that any departure from perfectly just and natural action is a crime inexpiable—that fluttering, scanty, ill-arranged draperies are sure marks of feebleness—and that a style of colouring, partaking of the extravagance of all these errors, indicates want of talent as surely as of taste—the works of Runciman will, without question, be ranked among the crude attempts of arrogant imbecility. Those, however, who examine his pieces with a wish to find beauties rather than faults, will not look in vain. Certainly true genius for art is present in most of his performances. Brown, his scholar and his friend, an able artist, and one who could think and feel for himself, thus writes regarding the merits of his master:—"His fancy was fertile, his discernment of character keen, his taste truly elegant, and his conceptions always great. Though his genius seems to be best suited to the grand and serious, yet many of his works amply prove that he could move with equal success in the less elevated line of the gay and the pleasing. His chief excellence was composition, the noblest part of the art, in which it is doubtful whether he had any living superior. With regard to the truth, the harmony, the richness, and the gravity of colouring—in that style, in short, which is the peculiar characteristic of the ancient Venetian, and the direct contrast of the modern English school, he was unrivalled. His works, it must be granted, like all those of the present times, were far from being perfect; but it was Runciman's peculiar misfortune, that his defects were of such a nature as to be obvious to the most unskilful eye, whilst his beauties were of a kind which few have sufficient taste or knowledge in the art to discern, far less to appre-

ciate."[1] We concur in much of what his friend has said; but to have great defects which are obvious to the vulgar, and great beauties which are only visible to the few, is, to say the least, an unfortunate arrangement.

[1] A contemporary critic in "The Earwig," in 1781, speaks of his "Parting of Lord and Lady Russell" as a "Sturdy, rawboned, Caledonian picture, coloured with brick-dust, charcoal, and Scotch snuff." —Ed.

COPLEY.

JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY, painter of "The Death of Chatham," "King Charles ordering the Arrest of the Five Members of Parliament," and "The Death of Major Peirson," has as yet had no biographer; and what I am about to relate of him is gathered from the memories of his companions in art, the affection of his descendants, and the imperfect authority of fugitive references and academy catalogues. He was the son of John Copley and Mary Singleton, his wife; and was, by the most credible accounts, born at Boston, in America, on the third day of July, 1737. His father was of English descent, had resided long in Ireland, and after marrying a lady of that country, removed to the New World, so nigh the time that his son was born as to countenance a report which prevailed, when he became eminent, that he was a native of Ireland. The fact that he was all along *claimed* as an American by the general rumour of the United States, might, perhaps, have been alleged to prove little—since, in a country constantly receiving, and willingly adopting new citizens from all quarters, considerable looseness as to such a point might be considered as natural. John Scolloy, of Boston, however, appears to furnish distinct evidence, when writing to the painter in 1782: he says—"I trust, amidst this blaze of prosperity, that you don't forget your dear native country, and the cause it is engaged in, which I know lay once near your heart, and I trust does so still." Other proofs will, perhaps, occur as we proceed.

In whatever country he was born, he was educated in America; and to her he owes his first inspiration in art. This came upon him, it seems, early enough: when some seven or eight years old, he was observed to absent himself from the family circle for several hours at a time, and

was traced to a lonely room, on whose bare walls he had drawn, in charcoal, a group of martial figures, engaged in some nameless adventure. Boston, at this period, had neither academy of arts nor private instructors. Copley had therefore to educate himself—a task, after all, not so difficult to genius as the dull imagine,—and which he set about undismayed, in the absence of models and masters.[1] It is noteworthy, that, almost at the same hour, America produced, amid her deserts and her trading villages, two distinguished painters, West and Copley; who, unknown to each other, were schooling themselves in the rudiments of art—attempting portraits of their friends one day, and historical composition the other; studying nature from the naked Apollos of the wilderness, as some one called the native warriors; and making experiments on all manner of colours, primitive and compound; in short, groping, through inspiration, the right way to eminence and fame. Of Copley's very early works no better account can be rendered, than that they were chiefly portraits and domestic groups, to which the wild wood scenery of America usually formed backgrounds. I once heard an artist say that the fame of a fine painter, who lived in Boston, found its way to England as early as the year 1760: no name was mentioned; and this, he said, was the more impressed on his mind, because of a painting of a "Boy and a tame

[1] According to a memoir of Copley that was privately printed in Boston in 1873, this account of his early training is not quite correct. Mrs. Copley, it appears, married again when her son Singleton was about eleven years old, and married a distinguished portrait painter and engraver of Boston, named Pelham. Copley from this time was most carefully instructed by his stepfather, whose house, it is said, "was, perhaps, the only place in New England where painting and engraving were predominant pursuits." His progress must have been rapid, for when he was about sixteen he published an engraving from a portrait of the Rev. W. Welsteed. He seems indeed to have had immense success as a portrait painter in Boston, judging by the number of early portraits enumerated by Mr. Augustus Thorndike Perkins, the writer of the memoir above mentioned, who gives a "List of some of his works," those chiefly which were painted in America and are little known in England. Boston, it must be remembered, though not perhaps then the "hub of the solar system," as, according to Oliver Wendell Holmes, it now claims to be, was the most cultivated town in America, and by no means a mere "trading village."—ED.

Squirrel," which came without any letter or artist's name, to one of the Exhibitions of the Royal Academy,[1] and when its natural action and the deep vivid colouring made the Academicians anxious to give it a good place, they were at a loss what to say about it in the catalogue, but, from the frame on which it was stretched being American pine, they called the work American. The surmise was just; it was a portrait by Copley of his half-brother Harry Pelham, and of such excellence as naturally raised high expectations.

In 1767, when Copley was thirty years old, we find him well known to the admirers of art on both sides of the Atlantic: he was then a constant exhibitor in the British Royal Academy; was earning a decent subsistence by his art among the citizens of Boston; had proved, too, that praise was sweet and censure bitter; and was, moreover, sighing for a sight of the Sistine chapel, and talking of the great masters. He thus sets forth his feelings in a letter to Captain Bruce, a gentleman of some taste, who seems to have been an admirer of the works of Copley:—"I would gladly exchange my situation for the serene climate of Italy, or even that of England; but what would be the advantage of seeking improvement at such an outlay of time and money? I am now in as good business as the poverty of this place will admit. I make as much as if I were a Raphael or a Correggio; and three hundred guineas a-year, my present income, is equal to nine hundred a-year in London. With regard to reputation, you are sensible that fame cannot be durable where pictures are confined to sitting-rooms, and regarded only for the resemblance they bear to their originals. Were I sure of doing as well in Europe as here, I would not hesitate a moment in my choice; but I might in the experiment waste a thousand pounds and two years of my time, and have to return baffled to America. Then I should have to take my mother with me, who is ailing: she does not, however, seem averse to cross the salt water once more; but my failure would oblige me to recross the sea again. My

[1] Not to the Royal Academy, for this was not founded until 1768, but to the first exhibition held by English artists in the great room of the Society of Arts.—Ed.

ambition whispers me to run this risk; and I think the time draws nigh that must determine my future fortune." In something of the same strain, and nearly at the same time, Copley wrote to his countryman West, then in high favour at the British Court:—"You will see, by the two pictures I have lately sent to your Exhibition, what improvement I may still make, and what encouragement I may reasonably expect. I must beg, however, that you will not suffer your benevolent wishes for my welfare to induce you to think more favourably of my works than they deserve. To give you a further opportunity of judging, I shall send over to your care for the Exhibition the portrait of a gentleman, now nearly finished: the owner will be in London at the same time. If your answer should be in favour of my visit to Europe, I must beg of you to send it as soon as you can, otherwise I must abide here another year, when my mother might be so infirm as to be unable to accompany me; and I cannot think of leaving her. Your friendly invitation to your house, and your offer to propose me as a member of the Society, are matters which I shall long remember." [1]

What the answers of Bruce and West were, I have not been able to learn: but it is to be supposed they still left it a matter of uncertainty, whether it would be more profitable to go to London or remain in Boston. Success the wisest head cannot ensure: sensible and prudent mediocrity frequently wins what true genius cannot obtain—the race of reputation is, in short, the most slippery and uncertain of all races. As seven years elapsed from this time till he finally set sail for Italy, we must suppose that Copley was busy extending his fame with his pencil, and hoarding his earnings for the outlay of travel and study. He had, as he acknowledged to West, as many commissions in Boston as he could execute. The price for his half-lengths was fourteen guineas; and he also executed many likenesses in crayons: he was, therefore, waxing comparatively rich. He was not one of those inconsiderate enthusiasts who rashly run into

[1] Copley, proposed by West, was elected a member of the Society of Artists in 1767, while still living in Boston.—Ed.

undertakings which promise no certain return. He had laboured as students seldom labour now for his knowledge, and for the remuneration which it brought; and he was wise not to commit his all to the waters of the Atlantic. He had continued a bachelor, according to the precept of Reynolds, that he might be able to pursue his studies without offering up his time and money at the altar of that expensive idol, a wife; and he had sent over various pictures, chiefly portraits in fancy postures and employments, with the hope of finding customers for them in the English market. He thus writes to Captain Bruce:—"Both my brother's portrait and the little girl's, or either of them, I am quite willing to part with, should any one incline to purchase them, at such a price as you may think proper." I have not heard that he held any further consultations with Captains or Academicians respecting his studies in Europe: the growing discord in America was a sharp sword that urged him onward; so, in 1774, having arranged his affairs, left a number of paintings in the custody of his mother, and put in his pocket enough of his winnings for a three years' campaign in the Old World, he set sail for Italy, by the way of England.[1]

In London he found few friends, and many counsellors; and left it for Rome, August 26th, 1774. It was his misfortune to choose for his companion an artist of the name of Carter, a captious, cross-grained, and self-conceited person, who kept a regular journal of his tour, in which he remorselessly set down the smallest trifle that could bear a construction unfavourable to the American's character. A few specimens may amuse the reader: *e.g.*—"This companion of mine is rather a singular character; he seems happy at taking things at the wrong end; and laboured near an hour to-day to prove that a huckaback towel was softer than a Barcelona silk handkerchief." . . . . "My agreeable companion suspects he has got cold upon his lungs. He is now sitting by a fire, the heat of which

[1] Copley had married in 1769 the daughter of Richard Clarke, a distinguished Boston merchant. He does not seem, however, to have brought his wife and children over with him any more than his mother. They followed afterwards.—ED.

makes me very faint; a silk handkerchief about his head, and a white pocket one about his neck, applying fresh fuel, and complaining that the wood of this country don't give half the heat that the wood of America does; and has just finished a long-winded discourse upon the merits of an American wood-fire, in preference to one of our coal. He has never asked me yet, and we have been up an hour, how I do, or how I have passed the night: 'tis an engaging creature." Upon another occasion one traveller wishes to walk, the other is determined to ride, and they stop in a shower to debate it. "We had a very warm altercation, and I was constrained to tell him, 'Sir, we are now more than eight hundred miles from home, through all which way you have not had a single care that I could alleviate; I have taken as much pains as to the mode of conveying you, as if you had been my wife; and I cannot help telling you, that she, though a delicate little woman, accommodated her feelings to her situation with much more temper than you have done.'" .... "There is nothing that he is not master of. On asking him to-day what they called that weed in America, pointing to some fern; he said he knew it very well; there was a deal of it in America, but he had never heard its name." .... "My companion is solacing himself, that if they go on in America for an hundred years to come, as they have for an hundred and fifty years past, they shall have an independent government: the woods will be cleared, and, lying in the same latitude, they shall have the same air as in the south of France; art would then be encouraged there, and great artists would arise." These ill-matched fellow-voyagers, soon after their arrival in Rome, separated; and Carter closes with the following kind description of Copley, as he appeared on the road in his travelling trim:—"He had on one of those white French bonnets which, turned on one side, admit of being pulled over the ears: under this was a yellow and red silk handkerchief, with a large Catherine wheel flambeaued upon it, such as may be seen upon the necks of those delicate ladies who cry Malton oysters: this flowed half way down his back. He wore a red-brown, or rather cinnamon, great coat, with a friar's cape, and

worsted binding of a yellowish white: it hung near his heels, out of which peeped his boots: under his arm he carried the sword which he bought in Paris, and a hiccory stick with an ivory head. Joined to this dress, he was very thin, pale, a little pock-marked, prominent eyebrows, small eyes, which, after fatigue, seemed a day's march in his head."

Copley was, no doubt, glad to be relieved from the company of a man who was peevish without ill health; who, with his smattering of Italian, continually crowed over one who could only speak English; who constantly contradicted him in company; and, finally, caricatured him when they parted. Our painter, in speaking afterwards of his *bore*, said "he was a sort of snail which crawled over a man in his sleep, and left its slime and no more."

Of Copley's proceedings in Rome we have no account; but we find him writing thus by May, 1775:—"Having seen the Roman school, and the wonderful efforts of genius exhibited by Grecian artists, I now wish to see the Venetian and Flemish schools: there is a kind of luxury in seeing, as well as there is in eating and drinking; the more we indulge, the less are we to be restrained; and indulgence in art, I think innocent and laudable. I have not one letter to any person in all my intended route, and I may miss the most beautiful things; I beg you, therefore, to assist and advise me. I propose to leave Rome about the 20th of May; go to Florence, Parma, Mantua, Venice, Inspruck, Augsburgh, Stuttgardt, Manheim, Coblentz, Cologne, Dusseldorf, Utrecht, Amsterdam, Leyden, Rotterdam, Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, Lille, Paris, London. The only considerable stay which I intend to make will be at Parma, to copy the fine Correggio. Art is in its utmost perfection here; a mind susceptible of the fine feelings which art is calculated to excite, will find abundance of pleasure in this country. The Apollo, the Laocöon, &c., leave nothing for the human mind to wish for; more cannot be effected by the genius of man than what is happily combined in those miracles of the chisel."

No memorial remains of what he said or did in the route marked out in this letter, save the copy of the Parma Cor-

reggio. His imitation is in England, and may be compared, without injury to his name, with any copies made by his brethren of the British school.

In the latter end of the year 1775, Copley reached London; and set up his easel at 25, George Street, Hanover Square. West was as good as his word: he introduced him to the Academy; in 1777 he became an associate; and in February, 1783, we find the King sanctioning his election as a Royal Academician.

By this time Copley's name had been established by works of eminent merit; among the first of which was "The Death of Chatham."[1] The chief excellence of this picture is the accurate delineation of that impressive event, and the vast number of noble heads, all portraits, with which the House of Lords is thronged; its chief fault is an air of formality, and a deficiency of deep feeling: yet, it must be owned, that those who are near the dying statesman are sufficiently moved. All lords could not feel alike;—some seem standing for their portraits; some seem anxious about their places; and others, from their looks, may be supposed inwardly rejoicing that Death, having struck the head of the administration, seems satisfied with his prey. Praise poured in upon the successful painter from all quarters; no people were more pleased than his old companions in America; and many letters were addressed to him from grave and aged persons.—"I delight," says the venerable Matthew Byles of Boston, "in the fame you have acquired; and I delight in being ranked amongst your earliest friends." No one, it may be believed, rejoiced more than his mother. She was now very old, feeble in body, sinking silently to the grave; had suffered in peace of mind, and in property, during the war of separation; but what she lamented most were the

[1] This well-known historic picture was presented to the National Gallery, in 1828, by the Earl of Liverpool. It is such scenes as these in contemporary history that historic painters should seek to perpetuate. Yet how few of them choose such. West had set the example in his "Death of Wolfe;" but in spite of the great success of this picture, he did not often follow up the practice, nor did Copley to any great extent except in his "Death of Major Peirson" and "Defeat of the Spanish Batteries at Gibraltar."—Ed.

interruptions which took place in the correspondence with her son: private letters were sometimes detained by the government, and she was months without the solace of his handwriting. It appears, too, that her circumstances were far from affluent; and it must be related to the honour of all concerned, that she made no complaint, and that her son did not forget her, or any of his relatives, amidst all his prosperity.

The fame which Copley acquired, and the value which he put upon this noble picture, brought him, along with many friends, a few detractors. To have refused 1,500 guineas, was, in the sight of some, offence enough; nor was this forgotten, when some time afterwards the fame of the painting was revived by a splendid engraving of large size, of which no less than five-and-twenty hundred impressions were sold in a very few weeks. He was advised to exhibit the picture; and naturally preferring the time when the town is fullest, hired a room, and announced his intention, without reflecting that the Royal Academy exhibition was about to open. He met with unexpected opposition. Sir William Chambers remonstrated:—the room which was chosen belonged to the King; it was his duty, he said, to protect the interests of the Royal Academy, which were sure to suffer from such partial exhibitions; and he interposed, lest the world should think that the King, who had aided and protected the Academy, now countenanced an exhibition injurious to its welfare, and contrary to the spirit and rules of the Institution.[1] This, Copley thought a little too autocratic in the architect, who, moreover, had not hesitated to embitter his opposition by most gratuitous incivilities. Those who desire to know how men of eminence in art addressed each other in the year 1781, may consult the conclusion of Sir William's epistle:—"No one wishes Mr. Copley greater success, nor is more sensible of his merit, than his humble servant; who, if he may be

[1] The "Institution" has had to lower its tone somewhat since then. Stothard's "Canterbury Pilgrims" was exhibited in London during the Academy Exhibition, and Haydon exhibited most of his large pictures in the same manner. The custom, of course, is now fully established, but Copley seems to have been the first to set the fashion.—Ed.

allowed to give his opinion, thinks no place so proper as the Royal Exhibition to promote either the sale of prints, or the raffle for the picture, which he understands are Mr. Copley's motives: or, if that should be objected to, he thinks no place so proper as Mr. Copley's own house, where the idea of a raree-show will not be quite so striking as in any other place, and where his own presence will not fail to be of service to his views." The painter was much incensed by this language, and had some intention, when he moved his picture to another place, of stating publicly the cause of this vexatious change: he did, however, what many wise men do—having vented his wrath and sarcasm on paper in the morning, he sweetened the bitterness of the invective a little at midday, laughed at the whole affair in the evening, and threw the satire into the fire before he went to bed. The picture was so much admired, that the artist was emboldened to have an engraving made from it of unusual size, viz. thirty inches long and twenty-two inches and a half high, by the hand of Bartolozzi.

When this great plate was finished, he was remembered by all those to whom he had happened to give offence;[1] more particularly by those who were envious of his success. They spread a report everywhere that he had fraudulently withheld from his subscribers the early impressions to which the order of signatures entitled them. The audacious calumny was promptly refuted: four gentlemen of taste and talent, one of them Edmund Malone, took up the cause of their injured friend, and proved to the satisfaction of

[1] This was seen in a lawsuit in which he became involved. Besides the large print by Bartolozzi, Copley had employed another engraver, named Delatre, to produce another much smaller plate, for which he agreed to pay £800. When this plate was finished, however, it turned out to be such a vile production that Copley refused to pay much more than a third of the sum stipulated. Delatre accordingly sued him, and all the artistic world, painters and engravers, gave evidence on one side or the other. The Judge, Lord Kenyon, acknowledged "that, in his ignorance of artistic matters, he was totally at a loss to know what path to take to arrive at justice," but the jury, who, we will presume, were more enlightened, gave a verdict for the plaintiff, and poor Copley had to pay £800 for an engraving which most artists agreed he could not publish without injuring his reputation.—Ed.

the public—first, that Bartolozzi received £2,000 for the plate; secondly, that the number of subscribers, from April, 1780, to August, 1782, amounted to 1,750; thirdly, that 2,438 impressions were taken in all; fourthly, that 320 proofs were struck from the plate; and finally, that the impressions were delivered to the subscribers according to the order of subscription. The approbation of many good judges compensated for the pain which this rumour occasioned; he could not but feel gratified with the united thanks of Washington and Adams, to whom he had presented two of the prints:—"This work," says the former, "highly valuable in itself, is rendered more estimable in my eye, when I remember that America gave birth to the celebrated artist who produced it."—"I shall preserve my copy," said the latter, "both as a token of your friendship, and as an indubitable proof of American genius."

At this time historical painting seemed to have a chance of taking a hold on public affection: the King patronized it openly: several dignitaries of the Church, and sundry noblemen, obeyed their own taste, or the example of the throne, and ordered pictures; and finally, Alderman Boydell entered into a covenant with a number of the Academicians to unite their talents, and form a gallery of English works in the manner of some of those in foreign lands: we have stated this more fully elsewhere; at present it is sufficient to say that Copley was one of the select, and that various subjects presented themselves to his fancy:—1. The Assassination of Buckingham; 2. Charles signing Strafford's Death-Warrant; 3. Charles addressing the Citizens of London; 4. The five impeached Members brought in triumph to Westminster; 5. The Speaker of the Commons thanks the City Sheriffs for protecting the five impeached Members; 6. The Members of the House of Commons appear before the Army on Hounslow; 7. London sends six Aldermen to General Monk, and submits; 8. The Lord Mayor presenting a Gold Cup to Monk; 9. The General conducts the Members back to Westminster Hall; 10. The King's Escape from Hampton Court. It must be confessed that some of these themes smack of Bow bells and Cheapside; they were probably suggested to

Copley by the worthy Alderman, who was anxious to honour his predecessors, in the hope of not being forgotten himself. While this list was under consideration, an event happened, in the course of the war, which furnished a subject of more immediate interest.

The French invaded Jersey; stormed St. Helier's; took the commander prisoner, and compelled him to sign the surrender of the island. Major Peirson, a youth of twenty-four, refused to yield—collected some troops—charged the invaders with equal courage and skill—defeated them with much effusion of blood, but fell himself in the moment of victory, not by a random shot, but by a ball aimed deliberately at him by a French officer, who fell in his turn, shot through the heart by the African servant of the dying victor. It is enough to say in praise of any work, that it is worthy of such a scene. The first print I ever saw was from this picture: it was engraved by Heath; and equals in dimensions that of "The Death of Chatham." I was very young, not ten years old; but the scene has ever since been present to my fancy. I thought then, what I think still, on looking at the original—that it is stamped with true life and heroism: there is nothing mean, nothing little,—the fierce fight, the affrighted woman, the falling warrior, and the avenging of his death are all there: the story is finely told. This picture was painted for Boydell: long afterwards, when his gallery was dispersed, it was purchased back by Copley, and is now in the keeping of his distinguished son, Lord Lyndhurst.[1]

His next subject was a much more magnificent one, but too vast and varied, perhaps: the repulse and defeat of the Spanish floating batteries at Gibraltar. The Common

[1] This picture, as every one knows, is now in the National Gallery, having been purchased for the nation at the sale of Lord Lyndhurst's pictures in 1864. It would seem that Copley must have gone himself to Jersey to make studies for it, for he tells us that "the background is an exact view of the town of St. Helier's, where the battle was fought." Moreover, Messrs. Redgrave mention the existence of some careful drawings made by him of that locality. The Duke of Wellington is said to have called this picture "the best battle-piece he had ever seen," and in truth it is a remarkably accurate work, but somewhat cold, and wanting in poetic enthusiasm.—Ed.

Council of London commissioned this picture for their hall; and they gave ample space and verge enough wherein to trace the beleaguered rock and its fiery assailants; viz. a panel twenty-five feet long and twenty-two feet and a half high. In this great picture, as in his others, he introduced many portraits: the gallant Lord Heathfield himself is foremost in the scene of death; and near him appear Sir Robert Boyd, Sir William Green, chief engineer, and others, to the amount of a dozen or fifteen. The fire of the artillery has slackened; the floating batteries, on whose roofs thirteen-inch shells, and showers of thirty-two pound balls had fallen harmless, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, are now sending up flames on all sides; whilst their mariners are leaping in scores into the sea. The scene of desolation is certainly grand. There is, however, a want of true perspective: the defenders of the rock are like the children of Anak; the perishing mariners at the very line where the sea washes the defences of stone are less than ordinary mortals. The figures have been charged with looking more formal and stiff than nature. This may be too severe—but on the whole I cannot class the piece with his happiest works.[1] I may mention here a work bequeathed by Copley to that noble institution, Christ's Hospital School, painted early in his career, and representing the escape of Brooke Watson, when a sea-boy, from a shark. He was bathing at Havannah; a shark seized his foot and snapped it off, and was about to devour him, when a seaman struck the monster between the eyes with a heavy boat-hook and saved his companion. The terror of the boy—the fury of the fish—and the resolution of the mariner, are well represented; while the agitated water in which the scene is laid seems bloody.

Subjects from British history and British poetry were what Copley chiefly found pleasure in. The first Installation

[1] This huge battle-piece still hangs in Guildhall, but a sketch or study for it of smaller dimensions may be seen in the National Gallery. When first exhibited, its popularity was such that it attracted, it is said, 60,000 visitors; and the artist, by the exhibition of this and the "Death of Chatham," made £5,000. It was engraved by W. Sharpe on a large scale.—Ed.

of the Order of Saint Patrick seemed to him a subject worthy of the pencil; and Edmund Malone readily aided him with his knowledge; and the Irish nobility, with but one exception or so, offered to give him the advantage of their faces, so that the whole might bear the true image of the Green Isle. Of this projected work the painter thus speaks: "I think it a magnificent subject for painting; and my desire is to treat it in an historic style, and make it a companion to the picture of Lord Chatham: filling the whole with the portraits of the knights and other great characters. The idea originated with myself, and I mean to paint it on my own account, and publish a print from it of the same size as that of Chatham." This was a vain imagination—the King approved of the work: the nobility of Ireland promised to sit for their portraits, though one of them, Lord Inchiquin, I think, declared sitting for one's portrait to be a punishment almost unendurable; but, somehow, here the matter stopped, and the first Installation of the Order of St. Patrick is yet to be painted.

It ought to be mentioned, that Copley, amid all his historical works, continued to paint portraits, and had in that way considerable employment. Among others he took the likeness of Lord Mansfield; and has left us a very fine family group of himself, his wife, and his children: the hands are well proportioned; there is much nature in the looks of the whole, and some very fine colouring.

A portrait painter in large practice might write a pretty book on the vanity and singularity of his sitters. A certain man came to Copley, and had himself, his wife, and seven children, all included in a family piece:—"It wants but one thing," said he, "and that is the portrait of my first wife—for this one is my second."—"But," said the artist, "she is dead, you know, sir: what can I do? she is only to be admitted as an angel."—"Oh, no! not at all," answered the other; "she must come in as a woman—no angels for me." The portrait was added, but some time elapsed before the person came back: when he returned he had a stranger lady on his arm. "I must have another cast of your hand, Copley," he said: "an accident befell my second wife; this lady is my third, and she is come to

have her likeness included in the family picture." The painter complied—the likeness was introduced—and the husband looked with a glance of satisfaction on his three spouses: not so the lady; she remonstrated; never was such a thing heard of—out her predecessors must go. The artist painted them out accordingly; and had to bring an action at law to obtain payment for the portraits which he had obliterated.

The mind of Copley teemed with large pictures: he had hardly failed in his Irish subject before he resolved to try an English one, viz. the Arrest of the Five Members of the Commons by Charles the First. Malone, an indefatigable friend, supplied the historical information, and gave a list of the chief men whose faces ought to be introduced. It was the good fortune of the eminent men of those days, both Cavaliers and Roundheads, that their portraits had chiefly been taken by the inimitable Vandyke: all that had to be done, therefore, was to collect these heads, and paint his picture from them. They were, it is true, scattered east, west, north, and south: but no sooner was Copley's undertaking publicly announced, than pictures came from all quarters; and it is a proof of his name and fame that such treasures were placed in his hands with the most unlimited confidence. The labour which this picture required must have been immense; besides the grouping, the proper distribution of parts, and the passion and varied feelings of the scene, he had some fifty-eight likenesses to make, of a size corresponding with his design. The point of time chosen is when the King having demanded if Hampden, Pym, Hollis, Hazelrig, and Strode were present, Lenthall the Speaker replies,—"I have, sir, neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak, in this place, but as the House is pleased to direct me." The scene is one of deep interest, and the artist has handled it with considerable skill and knowledge. The head I like best is the dark and enthusiastic Sir Harry Vane; the Cromwell is comparatively a failure. Many have left their seats dismayed; while fear, and anger, and indignation have thrown the whole into natural groupings: the picture was much talked of when it appeared, and deserves to be remembered still.

There has always been a difficulty in disposing of historical pictures in this country; and no one was doomed to experience it more than Copley: no customer made his appearance for Charles and the impeached Members. I know not whether the following remarkable letter, from a wealthy peer, arose from his own inquiries, or from an offer made by the artist; the letter, however, is genuine, and proves that they err who imagine that the spirit of bargaining is confined to mercantile men:—

"Lord Ferrers's compliments to Mr. Copley; he cannot form any judgment of the picture; but, as money is scarce, and any one may make eight per cent. of their money in the funds, and particularly in navy bills, and there is so much gaming, he hopes he'll excuse his valuing his picture in conformity to the times, and not think he depreciates in the least from Mr. Copley's just merit; but if he reckons fifty-seven figures, there are not above one-third that are capital, but are only heads or a little more; and therefore he thinks, according to the present times, if he gets nine hundred pounds for the picture with the frame, after the three other figures are put in, and it is completely finished, and he has the power of taking a copy, it is pretty near the value: that is what very few people can afford to give for a picture. However, if Mr. Copley would undertake to do a family piece for him with about six figures, about the size of the picture he has of Mr. Wright's, with frame and all, he would agree to give him a thousand guineas for the two pictures. But he imagines the Emperor or some of the Royal Family may give him more, perhaps a great deal more, which he wishes they may, and thinks he well deserves; but, if he can't make a better bargain, Lord Ferrers will stand to what he says, and give him six months to consider of it, and will not take it amiss if he sells it for ever so little more than he has mentioned, as he has stretched to the utmost of his purse, though he does not think he has come near up to Mr. Copley's merit."

"Upper Seymour Street, 5th June, 1791."

Copley felt himself so much obliged to Malone for historical help, that he made a public acknowledgment of it;

but he seemed not to be aware that he had received invisible help before, both in America and England. The person who had done this good deed was Lord Buchan; and, lest the painter should go to the grave in ignorance of the name of his benefactor, he addressed this characteristic note from Dryburgh:—"You are now the father of my list in the charming art of perpetuating or greatly extending the impressions received by the most spiritual of our external senses from living forms. I take pride to myself in having been the first, with your 'Boy and Squirrel,' and your excellent character from the other side of the Atlantic, to make you properly known to the illustrious Pitt, to whom in his particular department there has been found no equal." This northern lord lived, and, I hear, died, in the belief that he was the great support of literature and patron of art. But, though the elder brother of two men of wit and genius, he was, in fact, in every possible respect, saving his coronet, a *nobody*.

No artist was ever more ready than Copley to lend his pencil to celebrate passing events; the defeat of De Winter by Duncan was now celebrated in a picture, exhibiting considerable skill in depicting maritime movements, and containing in all twelve portraits. He is not, however, so happy at sea as on land; indeed, a naval battle is conducted on such mathematical principles, that no human ingenuity seems capable of infusing poetic beauty into the scene. When we have seen the sides, and the prow, and the stern, of a ship, we have seen all; their tiers of guns, their masts, their rigging, and their mode of fighting, are all alike. The battle of La Hogue is the best of all the pieces of this class; yet a distinguished officer once called it, in my hearing, a splendid confusion; and declared if the painter had commanded the fleet, and conducted it so, he would have been soundly thrashed. When Nelson fell at Trafalgar, West dipped his brush in historic paint—Copley did the same; the former finished his picture, the latter but planned his. The tide of taste had set in against compositions of that extent and character: more youthful adventurers were making their appearance. Lawrence, Beechey, and Shee, with their splendid portraitures

—Stothard, with his poetic pictures—and Turner, with his magical landscape, began to appear in the van; and, at seventy years of age, nature admonished Copley to cease thinking of the public, and prepare for a higher tribunal. He had still, however, energy sufficient to send works from his easel to the Exhibition; amongst which were portraits of the Earl of Northampton, Baron Graham, Viscount Dudley and Ward, Lord Sidmouth, the Prince of Wales at a review, attended by Lord Heathfield, and other military worthies. His last work was "The Resurrection;" and with this his labours closed, unless we except a portrait of his son, Lord Lyndhurst, painted in 1814.[1] An American gentleman applied to him for information and materials to compose a narrative of his life: he felt a reluctance, which all must feel, about complying with such a request; and while he was hesitating, death interposed. He died 9th September, 1815, aged seventy-eight years.

Those who desire to know the modes of study, the peculiar habits, the feelings and opinions, likings and dislikings, of Copley, cannot, I fear, be gratified. No one lives now who could tell us of his early days, when the boy, on the wild shores of America, achieved works of surpassing beauty; he is but remembered in his declining years, when the world had sobered down his mood, and the ecstasy of the blood was departed. He has been represented to me by some as a peevish and peremptory man, while others describe him as mild and unassuming. Man has many moods, and they have all, I doubt not, spoken the truth of their impressions. I can depend more upon the authority which says he was fond of books, a lover of history, and well acquainted with poetry, especially the divine works of Milton. These he preferred to exercise either on foot or on horseback, when labour at the easel was over—and this bookish turn has been talked of as injurious to his health; but no one has much right to complain of shortness of years, who lives to see out threescore and eighteen.

[1] It is strange that only one of Copley's paintings has appeared at the Winter Exhibitions at Burlington House. This one was a sketch for the picture of "The Death of Chatham," lent by Mr. Anderdon, in 1877.—Ed.

He sometimes made experiments in colours: the methods of the Greeks, the elder Italians, and the schools of Florence and Venice, he was long in quest of; and he wrote out receipts for composing those lustrous hues in which Titian and Correggio excelled.[1] For the worth of his discoveries, read not his receipts, but look at his works; of all that he ever painted, nothing surpasses his "Boy and Squirrel" for fine depth and beauty of colour; and this was done, I presume, before he had heard the name of Titian pronounced. His "Samuel reproving Saul for sparing the People of Amalek" is likewise a fine bit of colouring, with good feeling and good drawing too. I have only this to add to what has been already said of his works; he shares with West the reproach of want of natural warmth—and uniting much stateliness with little passion. As to his personal character, it seems to have been, in all essential respects, that of an honourable and accomplished gentleman.

Copley's eminent son still inhabits the artist's house in George Street, Hanover Square; and all must consider it as honourable to this noble person, that he has made it his object to collect works of his father's pencil wherewith to adorn the apartments in which they were conceived and produced.[2]

[1] Copley's method of painting was extremely slow, and he wearied his sitters greatly by the length of time he required. It is told of him that once, when he was painting a family group at Windsor Castle, the Queen, children, dogs, and parrots all got equally tired, and the Queen even complained of the matter to the King; but West assured their majesties that his fellow-countryman, whom he had kindly introduced, was painting a fine picture, and must be allowed to proceed with it in his own way.—Ed.

[2] Lord Lyndhurst died in 1863. Miss Copley lived in her old age at Hampton Court. She once told the writer of the memoir before mentioned that she remembered her father quite well. "Many fine gentlemen," she said, "came to our house in George Street, and I have seen many since, but I never observed one who surpassed my father in elegance of manner and dignity of deportment." All testimony, indeed, tends to show that he was a very imposing old gentleman. He was fond of dress and external magnificence, but found his chief pleasure in painting, and his next in reading the English classics. His favourite book was "Paradise Lost."—Ed.

MORTIMER.

JOHN HAMILTON MORTIMER was born in the year 1741, but in what month none of his biographers have mentioned. He was the youngest of four children, two of whom were daughters. His father, originally a miller—or, as the admirers of the painter write it, the proprietor of a mill—and, according to the same authorities, the lineal descendant of Mortimer, Earl of March—became a collector of the customs at Eastbourne, in Sussex, where he lived in good repute, and acquired the means of giving his sons a respectable education, and of assisting their advance in life. A love of art belonged to the family. The collector's brother, a wandering adventurer, who went from vale to vale, and from town to town, limning faces and landscapes for his subsistence, left many drawings; and, moreover, an altar-piece in Aylesbury church representing our Lord's Supper. These works—of a low order as they were—had an early influence on the mind of Mortimer; he studied them and copied them, and carrying his speculations farther, began to form original designs from nature and from fancy: his attempts attracted the notice of his father, who, perceiving his inclination, and perhaps his genius, consented that he should try his fortune in the precarious department of the pencil. The application of a friend, and a premium of a hundred pounds, placed him in the studio of the once famous Hudson.

Mortimer was some eighteen or nineteen years old when he arrived in London. Sir J. Reynolds had more than commenced that career which ended so gloriously for his name, and other artists were making their appearance compared to whom Hudson was but a dauber; we may therefore wonder why he was not placed in some more gifted man's studio. The fame of Hudson was perhaps

still highest in the provinces; in those days reputation travelled more slowly than now, and the rising sun of Reynolds might not yet have eclipsed that of his old master in the opinion of the people of Eastbourne. Mortimer's first object was to acquire the art of colouring; in drawing he had already made good progress, and the class of subjects to which he wished to dedicate his mind had been early fixed. Bred on the sea-coast, and amid a daring and rugged race of hereditary smugglers, it had pleased his young imagination to walk on the shore when the sea was agitated by storms—to seek out the most sequestered places among the woods and rocks; and frequently, and not without danger, to witness the intrepidity of the contraband adventurers, who, in spite of storms and armed excisemen, pursued their precarious trade, at all hazards. In this way he had from boyhood become familiar with what amateurs of art call "Salvator Rosa-looking scenes:" he loved to depict the sea chafed and foaming, and fit "to swallow navigation up," ships in peril, and pinnaces sinking; banditti plundering, or reposing in caverns, and all such situations as are familiar to pirates on water and outlaws on land. To this rough sea-coast academy much of that peculiarity which marks the works of Mortimer may be traced; with a certain dash of savage grandeur, it communicated to his style a wild freedom unknown at that period in the productions of the English school.

He soon discovered that little could be learned from Hudson, who to ignorance in his profession added rude and unconciliating manners. These contributed to drive Mortimer, after a short experiment, to the studio of Pine, considered in those days a capital colourist. But he did not remain long even there: he perceived that in working under the opinion and control of another, he was losing his own original mode of execution,—that his hand was acquiring a style of a composite kind, and, what was worse, that he was habituating his mind to servility. He who aspires after true fame must never put his head and hand under the control of another. Mortimer now studied more patiently, and with more profit, in the gallery of antique figures opened by the liberality of the Duke of

Richmond. This he called his dead school; the school on the shores of Sussex was his living one—and in both he laboured with such success that he gained the notice of Cipriani and Moser, who represented him in such a favourable light to the peer, that he desired much to have retained him on his establishment for the purpose of painting, as was the fashion of those days, the galleries, and walls, and ceilings of some of his houses. To have subjects dictated and spaces defined, and to be painting under a patron's eye at so much per annum, was unpleasing to one who wished to think for himself, and work when it suited his convenience: the offer was politely declined. The Society for the Encouragement of Arts awarded him several premiums for drawings made from the figures in the Richmond Gallery. "Soon after," says Edwards, in his "Anecdotes of Painting," "he was admitted a member of the private academy in St. Martin's Lane. In those seminaries he acquired very considerable knowledge of the human figure, which he drew in a style superior to most of his contemporaries."

The reputation which all allow that Mortimer about this time suddenly acquired, has been ascribed by the biographers to the picture of "Edward the Confessor seizing the Treasures of his Mother," which, in the opinion of Reynolds, excelled the rival painting by Romney so decidedly as to entitle him to the premium of fifty guineas. The tradition of the studios, however, ascribes his first great start in fame to a source more romantic, or at least accidental. It was the fashion in those days for painters to be largely employed in embellishing ceilings, and walls, and furniture; and it may be remembered that the coach of Sir Joshua Reynolds had the seasons painted on the panels: now the State coach which was to convey the King to the House of Lords required repair, and Mortimer was called in by the coachmaker to ornament the panels: which he did so successfully, that the people, who crowded to see their young Sovereign, bestowed equal attention on the "Battle of Agincourt" painted on the carriage. The King, it is added, was so much pleased that he caused the panel to be taken out and preserved, and extended his

notice to Mortimer. To this incident is imputed the King's anxiety for the painter's admission into the Royal Academy. His success in the contest with Romney, however, whether this story of the panel be true or not, made him more widely known, and inspired him with new confidence in his own powers. He soon after produced a large picture of St. Paul preaching to the Britons: and so well was it thought of that the Society of Arts presented him with a hundred guineas, and when exhibited in Spring Gardens it so far excelled the works opposed to it, that some were justified in exclaiming, "We have now got an historical painter of our own!" It was indeed a picture of considerable merit—displaying no little originality of character in some of the heads—and, above all, it was the work of a very young man fresh from the country, who had never been abroad and had studied but little at home.

At this period he had acquired the friendship of Reynolds, which I must impute to the merit of the one and the discernment of the other, rather than seek a reason for it, as one of the biographers of Romney has done, in the circumstance that Mortimer was not a painter of portraits. He, in fact, painted a number of portraits, and generally seized the character; but what he won by drawing he lost by colouring, for his brush was no flatterer; and from want of skill or want of inclination to dip it in the hues of heaven, and soothe the fair or the vain, he had no chance of profitable success in that department. "In truth," says Edwards, in his "Anecdotes," "he seemed not over fond of that branch of painting, so that some of his productions of this kind were not so pleasing as those of some of his contemporary artists, who yet were much inferior to him in talent." To paint lips

> "Like the red rose-bud, moist with morning dew,
> Breathing delight,"

was not an art in which Mortimer excelled. He drew heads the size of life in black and white crayons in a masterly manner, and he chiefly loved to draw those of his friends. He probably disdained, or affected to disdain, fine colouring as unworthy of the boldness of genius: it

cannot, however, be doubted that fine colouring would have added infinitely to the value of all his compositions.[1]

It was not in clay-like colouring alone that he was distinguished from his brethren,—he desired to be thought a gay and a graceless fellow: one who could alike defy the dangers of the streets of London at midnight, and the effects of wine, and all manner of revelry. He loved that the morning light should find him the centre and soul of the merry ring—indulging in free licence of speech, nor solicitous about the delicacy of his wit or the purity of his humour. To enable him to brave the consuming tear and wear of such wild indulgence, it had pleased nature to bestow upon him uncommon strength and activity of body, and a constitution which no ordinary licence could effectually crush and destroy. It must be owned that Mortimer put these gifts of nature upon very severe duty. Besides the pleasures of the board and the bottle, he loved to exhibit himself in feats of activity and strength, and used to laugh at his less vigorous or more considerate brethren; and declared that the artists of London seemed the candidates for an hospital—the halt, the crooked, the rickety, the half-blind, and the deaf, all were there.

To aid in setting off his graceful person and his manly looks, he called in the help of costly and gaudy dress; costly and gaudy indeed, compared to the plain apparel of the children of prudence and utility of this generation, but yet unworthy of being shown with the damasked velvet and golden attire of dandies of the purest water in the first years of the reign of the good King George III.

[1] In Cunningham's "Cabinet Gallery of Pictures" there is an engraving given of a portrait of Mortimer by himself. He is dressed in the character of a chief of banditti, and has put on a somewhat fierce aspect in accordance with his part. In his criticism of this picture Cunningham says:—"There is a continual bustle, a desire to do more than is necessary in all Mortimer's pictures and drawings. He has vigour about him, but it is of the convulsive kind, he does all by muscular force, and by protracted straining; he can do nothing in tranquillity, his heroes draw their swords like furies, his banditti seem to be dividing the world rather than a purse, and his ladies will not be quiet and let their charms work their way, they stare and strut and put on sentiment too strong to be becoming."—Ed.

The courtier who could go to a levee with a whole manor on his back, had no chance of being outshone by an artist, who could only put on to the worth of a picture or two: yet a true fop-painter of other days, amid all the imitative glitter of his costume, deserves remembrance; and luckily we have one described with all the accuracy of a regimental tailor. Behold one of the sons of St. Luke, some half a century ago, dressed for an evening party! "He entered the room in a scarlet lapelled coat, with large gilt buttons the size of a half-crown; a white satin waistcoat, embroidered with sprigs of jasmine; a pair of black satin small-clothes, with Bristol stone knee-buckles; a pair of Scott's liquid dye blue silk stockings, with Devonshire clocks; long-quartered shoes, with large square buckles, which covered the whole of his instep down to his toes; a shirt with a frill and ruffles of lace; his hair pomatumed and powdered, with an immense toupee, three curls on a side, and tied up with a tremendous club behind." Such was Mortimer; and no doubt an artist-beau of this stamp surpassed as far in extravagance the modest sons of the brush and easel of these our days, as this Salvator of Sussex excelled his less athletic brethren in feats of agility and trials of strength.

Of his eccentricities while labouring under the delusion that he could not well be a genius without being unsober and wild, one specimen may suffice. He was employed by Lord Melbourne to paint a ceiling at his seat of Brocket Hall, Herts; and taking advantage of permission to angle in the fish-pond, he rose from a carousal at midnight, and seeking a net and calling on an assistant painter for help, dragged the preserve, and left the whole fish gasping on the bank in rows. Nor was this the worst: when reproved mildly, and with smiles, by Lady Melbourne, he had the audacity to declare that her beauty had so bewitched him he knew not what he was about. To plunder the fish-pond, and be impertinent to the lady, was not the way to obtain patronage: the impudent painter collected his pencils together and returned to London. He returned, nothing abashed by this sharp reproof, to his inelegant pleasures and ignoble company. To be reckoned a first-rate cricket-

player—to be the last who yielded to the circulation of the bottle—to rule in a loose frolic, and to conquer in a wrestling match were still among the prime points of his ambition.

He saw the folly of his ways at last, and resolved to amend and become wise. Perhaps he had abated the devil in his nature by a long course of indulgence, and desired to make an offering to art of the wreck which folly had left. To help him in keeping this sensible resolution, he took to wife Jane Thirsel,[1] the daughter of a respectable farmer in the neighbourhood of Foxtone, with whom a courtship of ten years had made him well acquainted; and his choice was a fortunate one. She loved him much, and by her winning manner and excellent good sense persuaded him out of his extravagance, and restrained him from consorting with profane wits. Dr. Bates of Missenden, their friend and frequent guest, said Mortimer and his wife possessed, in an uncommon degree, the same turn of mind, brilliancy of fancy, and smartness of repartee, accompanied with the utmost cheerfulness of temper. The remedy of matrimony, no doubt, had come rather late; much of the original vigour of the man was gone, his activity was declining, and the good looks in which he so prided himself had become faded and dim. His powers of mind and readiness of fancy were not, however, lessened; and he applied himself to art with more than the diligence, and all the enthusiasm, of his early days.

His places of residence have been thought worthy of notice by his biographers. He had lodgings for several years at one Maronne's, a bookseller, under the piazzas in Covent Garden: he next lived with Langford, an auctioneer, in the churchyard of St. Paul, Covent Garden; and then he removed to Norfolk Street, Strand.

The order in which the chief works of Mortimer were executed cannot now be ascertained; nor is there any complete catalogue of his productions. He made twelve heads from the chief characters in Shakespeare; of which the one that personated—

[1] I find this name corrected to Hurrel in the Cunningham MSS.—Ed.

"The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling,"

showed a bard thinking with all his might, and putting on a look of inspiration and rapture; while those of Caliban and Edgar are full of original character and expression, and show how much he liked subjects strange and superhuman. He was so fond of the monsters which belong to a disturbed fancy or a wild dream, that he actually drew and etched a set of those capricious creations, and dedicated them to Sir Joshua Reynolds. The calm, contemplative President, a lover of the medium in all things, was not a little startled when he saw these wanderings and vagaries of one whom he esteemed: but advice to an artist so will-o'-wispish as Mortimer he knew was useless; so he looked pleased—complimented him on his twofold skill with the pencil and graver, and laid them carefully aside among his other curiosities. It must be confessed that, as far as style goes in the execution of things strange and monstrous, these works are masterly: they show, too, a kind of distempered fancy, a certain sort of inspired incoherence, which many mistake for the purest imagination. But true imagination never calls up shapes out of keeping with tradition or nature—there are no creatures with seven heads and ten horns in all her speculations. These visions of Mortimer seem but a more fanciful sort of heraldic inventions; and may be ranked with the Lamias of antiquity, the mermaids of the middle ages, and the krakens which American navigators continue to see upon the coast of Norway.

Soon after his marriage, Mortimer, to show that he was not only reclaimed from folly, but resolved to teach the world from his own experience an important lesson in life, drew and exhibited "The Progress of Vice;" a work which was well received, for its purpose was well understood; and the painter had rendered his details sufficiently plain for all degrees of comprehension. But it must be owned that there is a certain beauty even in vice which is dangerous to look upon; and he who gives loose images of loveliness with the hope that we shall loathe them as is our duty, calculates too surely upon the better side of human

nature. He was so much pleased with his success, that he drew and exhibited "The Progress of Virtue;" but the pleasure of having limned a moral work was destined to be all his reward. It was sarcastically observed, that the town, respecting the first work, thought with the poet—

> "Vice is a monster of such hideous mien
> That to be hated needs but to be seen"—

and came in crowds to look and loathe, and walk home wiser and amended: but, with regard to the second, they were content to imagine an image of virtue for themselves; and did not believe that the painter was so fully reclaimed from "life's wild career" as to justify this attempt to become a master in morals. Whatever was the cause, "The Progress of Virtue" found few admirers.

The designs of Mortimer have been generally preferred to his paintings. He threw these out at one effort of fancy—every after-touch rendered them colder and tamer; and when he desired to expand them into full-sized pictures, he found that the mechanical labour gradually crept, like the nightmare, over his performance, taming down the happy ecstasy of early thought, and giving to his flowing touches the look of lines in architecture—more a matter of geometry than of fancy. The cold, dull colours which he spread over the whole, subdued in the eyes of many all that remained of original beauty in the performance. His talent and readiness in design made him in some request among booksellers and churchmen: he illustrated several of the poets; he designed the elevation of the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness, for the great window of Salisbury cathedral; and the Cartoons for the window of stained glass in Brasen Nose College, Oxford, were of his drawing.[1] "It was astonishing," says Pilkington, "to observe with what rapidity he wrought. No man seemed less conscious of his own powers than himself, or less unwilling to encourage

[1] He likewise etched a number of his own designs. Eleven plates were published by him in 1768, and nine in 1778. Other of his designs were engraved by Blyth, and his "Battle of Agincourt" by Ryland.—Ed.

others who had the smallest pretensions to excellence. Before he attempted any work of importance, he always devoted some time to the perusal of that author who could give him the most information; and, indeed, his conversation frequently teemed with allusions to the politest writers, expressed in the most forcible terms. After the sketch had been drawn he generally gave himself some rest."

Some time in the year 1775 his health began to decline; and he was advised by Dr. Bates to remove for a time to Aylesbury, in Berks; where he found a spacious house fit for the exhibition of his works, a garden stored with flowers and fruit-trees, and society of a soberer and worthier sort than he had formerly abandoned himself to in London. The fresh air—the change of scene—and the converse which he enjoyed with the Kenyons, the Drakes, the Scottowes, and the Despencers—all contributed to the recovery of his health, and the restoration of his original ardent tone of mind. He wrought with much diligence; and in one year, the most fruitful of his brief life, painted works to the amount of nine hundred pounds. Those who had known Mortimer in his wilder days were astonished at the change which reflection had now wrought: his discourse was decent, and even delicate; his attendance at church punctual; and the more discerning remarked that he was deeply pained at the thought of his past levities, and was seeking consolation where it could best be found —in the Holy Scriptures.

The air and the society of Aylesbury were, no doubt, beneficial to his health; but not equally so to his fame. He who lives by painting must consent to live as publicly as he can; when no longer seen, his works and his merits run the risk of being forgotten. He who retires into solitude with the hope that patronage and employment will follow and find him out, will soon see his delusion, unless his genius is so original and rare as to command, like a spell, the attention of his country.

He returned to London: but if he was no longer the gay and the graceless, neither was he the athletic and the active, Mortimer; and—what in his present state of feel-

ing he, perhaps, deplored more,—he was considered insincere by the envious and the malignant. His skill of hand, and his readiness of fancy, had not, however, deserted him; and he designed, and drew, and painted, as readily as ever. He had formed his style first on nature, and confirmed and corrected it by the study of the antique: and such was his wondrous facility of hand, and knowledge of the human form, that he could draw with a common pen and ink the human skeleton in any attitude, and afterwards, with a different-coloured ink, clothe it with muscles. He had, in an uncommon degree, that vivid power of imagining as if it lived and breathed before him, whatever subject he chose to touch; and despised models. "All subjects," says Pilkington, "whether of history, landscape, animals, or still life—every object from the human figure to a plant, a flower, an insect, a reptile, or shell—he could represent from his imagination only, with a truth and perfection that rivalled the nature he imitated."

It must be acknowledged that his productions—at least most of those which are now visible—scarcely support such high praise; but, no doubt, it is much to the injury of Mortimer's fame that his works are chiefly sketches, and confined of course to the portfolio. Had he mastered colour, or turned his mind in time to it, he would have produced pictures worthy of any modern collection. His "King John signing Magna Charta"—"The Battle of Agincourt"—"The Origin of Health"—"The Tragic and Comic Muses"—"Sextus consulting Erictho, from Lucan"—"The Incantation"—"Vortigern and Rowena"—and his "Groups of Banditti"—are all marked with an air which belongs to no other painter. He has at least the merit of looking like himself alone—a merit not small in these latter days of sordid imitation in literature and art. It has been remarked, that he impressed nobleness and truth on the countenances of all his figures; and moreover, that with these noble and beautiful characters his imagination was so amply stored, that, in all his numerous paintings and drawings, there never appeared two that were not different. On looking at his heads, one can readily imagine that he first sought the foundation of the character

in life, and then dwelt upon it, and embellished it from a fancy ready to elevate what was common, and render what was only brave heroic. It is related of him by Ireland, that when requested to delineate the Passions, as personified by Gray—more particularly

"Moody Madness laughing wild amidst severest woe"—

he opened his portfolio, and pointing to the principal figure in the eighth plate of "The Rake's Progress," exclaimed, "If I had never seen this print, I should say it was not possible to paint these contending passions in the same countenance. Having seen this, which displays the poet's idea with the faithfulness of a mirror, I dare not attempt it. I could only make a correct copy; a deviation from this portrait in a single line would be a departure from the character."

Neither books nor tradition enable me to say much more of Mortimer. He came from Aylesbury to his house in Norfolk Street some time in September, 1778; he appeared to ail little; was cheerful; talked of his future prospects in art; his expectation of being admitted into the Royal Academy;[1] spoke of his own many-coloured career; and, laughing, declared he would write it in Hudibrastic verse. He wrought little, and seemed on the point of wearing through the winter, when he was attacked by a fever, with such violence that his constitution, weakened by early excesses, sunk in the struggle, after a few days of great suffering. Mortimer died in the arms of his attached friend, Dr. Bates, on the 4th of February, 1779, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, and was buried beside the altar in the church of High Wycombe, near his great picture of "St. Paul preaching to the Britons."[2]

[1] He was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1778, this being the first year that he had exhibited. His contributions were subjects from Spenser, a family group, and some landscapes. At the time he died he was a R.A. elect, at the express wish, it is said, of the King, who admired his works.—Ed.

[2] Eight pictures, including the "Battle of Agincourt" and "Vortigern," before mentioned, were exhibited at the Royal Academy in the following May; since then he appears to have fallen very much out of

From the amount of reputation acquired by Mortimer in his day, posterity has made no gentle deductions. Fame is, indeed, hard to win; and the most gifted spirit cannot be sure of either achieving or retaining it for a moment. Like quicksilver in fickle weather, the fame of living men is continually rising and falling: nor is it a certain thing with the dead. Fashions, manners, faces, and events, on the depicting of which the hope of reputation was founded, wear out, are forgotten, or cease to interest: some colossal genius steps into the path perhaps, and throws the humbler wayfarer into the shade; or some stern critic, armed in the triple mail of art, learning, and authority, writes or lectures a reputation down—because, perhaps, he has heard it compared with his own. That genius may be considered as singularly fortunate who escapes both the sarcasms of the severe and the high-flown praise of the indiscriminating: but the fame of Mortimer has had to contend against this double pressure. Pilkington rates him too high; Fuseli too low: the former commiserated his fate, and admired the wildness of his conceptions; the latter liked none of the eminent masters of the English school—spoke with contempt of Hogarth, Gainsborough, and Romney—and was much disposed to consider every one a personal enemy who presumed to paint either poetry or history, which he presumptuously claimed as a province wherein he was sole monarch. He whose taste was so sublime that he accounted Milton and Shakespeare the only poets of our island, and whose notions of excellence

knowledge. Barry speaks warmly of his abilities in his "Account of a series of Pictures." He says:—"Near Hogarth I intended to bring in a very able masterly artist, Mortimer, whom the public foolishly let slip through their fingers, without deriving the advantages of which his abilities were capable; it gave me no small concern (as I once told him), that he should slink away from his own character, and waste his time upon unmeaning imitations of the banditti of Salvator Rosa, a man much his inferior whenever he would choose to exert himself." It is curious that Royal patronage did not bring him more into note, for the King, as we have seen, greatly admired his works, and His Majesty, it is said, asked one day why he was not an Academician, and on being told that there was not a vacancy, replied, "You know I have reserved the right to appoint two, and I desire Mortimer may be one." He died, however, before he could receive his diploma.—Ed.

in art were so lofty that he could endure little save the finest works of Greece or Italy, was not a man to sympathize with such productions as those of Mortimer.

Fuseli accuses him of weakness in conception; he might more properly have charged him with extravagance. There is a continual bustle—a desire to be doing more than is necessary—a feverish animation and convulsive strength in most of his groups—but little that can be called mean or commonplace. But then this perpetual effort in muscular action, and continual straining after vigorous mental expression is so apparent that we soon see it is unnatural: we feel that noble actions require to be done with more ease and grace. It is true that hot and heady fights, and feats of smugglers and banditti, cannot be achieved in tranquillity and repose: but it is also true that the animation of nature should not be exceeded. It is the province of heroes to perform noble actions without ungraceful efforts, and of great minds to think with calmness and dignity. All Mortimer's fine drawing, and wonderful ease and freedom of touch, cannot conceal the hectic flush and convulsive vigour of his heroes. The weak are always struggling to look strong; and when the heavy-headed try to think, there must needs be wrinkles on the brow to show the pain it costs. With all his defects, however, Mortimer was an artist of true original powers, and as such is entitled to the approbation of posterity, much more than any of those whose chief merit is the absence of gross faults.[1]

[1] Messrs. Redgrave, in their "Century of Painters," accord Mortimer but a very slight notice, treating him merely as a book illustrator. "His works in oil," they say, "were badly painted, and heavy and disagreeable in colour. His best works were his drawings; they could be sketched off with less study, and did not much vary in subject; his favourite imaginings were strained imitations of Salvator Rosa—banditti, monsters, and such like." I cannot speak from my own knowledge of this painter, for I have never, so far as I can remember, come across one of his paintings. His fantastic illustrations are occasionally met with in old editions of the poets; Cunningham's is by far the best account there is of him.—ED.

RAEBURN.

SIR HENRY RAEBURN was born at Stockbridge, then a separate suburb, but now a portion of Edinburgh, on the 4th day of March, 1756. His ancestors, according to the family account, lived on the border, and were husbandmen in peace and soldiers in war, till the days of disorder ended with the union of the crowns, upon which they laid aside the helmet and sword, and peacefully cultivated the ground during succeeding generations. One of their descendants, Robert Raeburn, removed to Stockbridge—married Ann Elder—commenced manufacturer—became the proprietor of mills, and father of two sons, William and Henry; of whom the former continued the business at Stockbridge, and the latter became that eminent artist, the story of whose life and labours I am about to relate. This unpretending descent, however satisfactory to the painter, was less so, it seems, to a northern antiquarian, who, unwilling to believe perhaps that anything high could be done by one lowly born, resolved to find him a loftier origin; and accordingly set up a genealogical tree, which averred, in the mystic language of allegorical biography, that he was a direct descendant from the Raeburns of Raeburn, a family distinguished in the Scottish wars, who had won worthily the honours of knighthood, and were allied, moreover, in blood and by marriage to many of those martial names

> "Who found the beeves which made their broth
> In Scotland and in England both."

Whether this lineage be rooted in reality or romance I know not, nor is it very material in the history of one whose fame arises from his being the Reynolds of the north, and the worthy companion in art of some of the most eminent men of the British school of painting.

When only some six years old, Raeburn was unhappily deprived of both parents: his father, a most worthy man, died first; his mother, whose tenderness was sorely missed by one so young, survived her husband but a few months, and the two orphans were left to Providence and their own good fortune. William, the elder by a dozen years or more, supplied, as far as kindness and attention would go, his father's place; and friends were found, who so far compassionated the youngest that he was placed in "Heriot's Wark," the Christ's school of Edinburgh, where he was trained with all solicitude both in morality and learning. To classical proficiency, indeed, he at no time ever laid claim, yet his education had been such as enabled him to maintain without reproach an intercourse by letters with some of the first literary men of the age; and his manners had been so well cared for, that he was never found wanting in that gentlemanly decorum and politeness which is not only becoming but necessary in a portrait painter. Those who remembered him at school said that he mastered his tasks like other boys, and seemed neither very bright nor very dull; in one thing, however, they remarked his superiority, during moments of idleness, such as are common in all classes. When the scholars drew figures on their slates or copy-books, those of Raeburn surpassed them all. The same thing was perceived in the school sketches of Wilkie; in the figures of arithmetic he was like other boys, but in the figures of men he had no rival. Raeburn has been often heard to say, that at school he formed intimacies with boys, which became the best friendships of his manhood. His nature was open and sincere; and though his temper was quick and warm, it had that quality in it which never estranged friends, nor permanently offended any one.

At the age of fifteen he was removed from school; but so little did his genius decide for him, that when a profession to be his support through life was to be chosen, he preferred that of a goldsmith, and was apprenticed accordingly. The silver chasing and engraving of Hogarth, and the wood carving and gilding of Chantrey, were something akin to their feelings, and even to their after pursuits: the

trade selected by Raeburn was less so, though it is connected with much that is elegant in workmanship and design. In the goldsmith's shop, he remembered his sketches at school, and commencing first with caricatures of his companions, he persevered till a better and worthier art rose out of his attempts. It has been asserted that art in him was spontaneous—that he received no lessons—and had not even seen a picture when he became distinguished for his miniatures. This is an audacious assertion concerning a youth of sixteen, in such a city as Edinburgh, where paintings are in many places, and prints in every bookseller's window. That he received no instructions is very probable—that he found out the way of portraiture in a great measure for himself, may be true likewise: but no one could live in a city full of works of art and be unconscious of their existence. The first thing, probably, that caught his master's attention was something like idleness on the part of his apprentice;—the second, the very beautiful miniatures which he had painted of all who chose to give their time to sit. His master was a mild and a worthy man; he praised those youthful attempts, and, to give him the advantage of examples, carried him to see the pictures of Martin. This artist, who resided in St. James's Square, and painted many portraits in the first starched Hudson style of Sir Joshua Reynolds, received the young aspirant courteously; and his condescension and his works delighted and astonished Raeburn so much, that he has been heard to declare, when his own name was deservedly high, and in spite of a disagreeable incident to be noticed presently, that the kind words of Martin were still in his ears, and his paintings before him. The portraits of that artist were to him what the verses of Ferguson were to Burns; and the result was not much dissimilar —they inspired a style more free and more mentally lofty than their own: a sorry match will fire a fine train of powder. He touched his miniatures with a bolder hand, and they rose in estimation: his master indulged him to the very limit of his wishes: he generally painted two portraits in a week, and as these were commissions, money came pouring in: and so much had art now become the

fixed purpose of his life, that he made an arrangement with his master to have all his time to himself, on the payment of a certain sum for the remainder of his apprenticeship.

In this state of comparative freedom his mind expanded: he began to take higher views of art, and to imagine himself destined to a brighter lot than that of making miniature likenesses of ordinary men. He formed something like a studio, or small gallery—began to try sketches in oil—and, having succeeded better than utter inexperience could have calculated on, he commenced working in the life size; nor did he find the task so serious as some of his brethren had said he would. His first difficulty was the preparation of his colours; putting them on the palette, and applying them according to the rules of art as taught in the academies. All this he had to seek out for himself: and there is no doubt that the thought which such knowledge cost him, and the labour and the time which it took to master so many obstacles, were well worth all the lectures thrice repeated of the skilful and the ingenious. To aid him in his undertaking he had recourse to Martin, who lent him several pictures with permission to copy them; but the elder artist felt now some sort of presentiment that the youth, who seemed so disposed to worship his works, would, in no distant day, eclipse them; so he limited his help to the act of lending, and refused or eluded all explanation of the way in which a picture, from a mere outline in chalk, becomes a finished performance in oil. An eminent London painter, on being lately solicited by a student to show him how to commence a picture, said, "Sir, that is a mystery which you must master for yourself:" in like manner, Martin maintained the mystery of the profession, and Raeburn had to make experiments, and drudge to acquire what belongs to the mechanical labour, and not to the genius of his art. Even this limited sort of kindness was soon at an end. Martin, probably, imagined that he was arming a warrior for a contest in which he would himself be overthrown: he unjustly accused him of selling one of the copies which he had permitted him to make; the youthful painter indignantly

asserted and established his innocence, and refused all farther accommodation from a patron so captious.

The name of Raeburn now began to be heard of in his native city; commissions for miniatures multiplied upon him: his portraits in oil, of the size of life, were not neglected—he obtained sitters in that branch also: and so much did his powers expand with space, that the latter soon outrivalled the former, and grew so much in request, that he resolved to relinquish miniature painting entirely, and abide by the easel. Several friends concurred in advising this; and, amongst them, was the learned and witty John Clerk, afterwards a judge of the court of session under the title of Lord Eldin; a gentleman of rare parts, who, to his other acquirements, added some skill of hand in the art of painting. The young artist and the young advocate were frequently together; and, as the one had to purchase costly colours, and the other expensive books, it is said they were sometimes so poor that they scarcely knew how to live till more money came in. On one of these occasions, Raeburn received an invitation to dine with Clerk; and, hastening to his lodgings, he found the landlady spreading a cloth on the table, and setting down two dishes, one containing three herrings and the other three potatoes. "And is this all?" said John. "All," said the landlady. "All! did I not tell ye, woman," he exclaimed, "that a gentleman was to dine with me, and that ye were to get six herrings and six potatoes?" The tables of both were better furnished before the lapse of many years; and they loved, it is said, when the wine was flowing, to recal those early days, when hope was high and the spirit unrebuked by intercourse with the world.

From the first, none of the stiffness and attitudinarianism of Martin appeared in the full-size portraits of Raeburn; and, what was much more remarkable, none of the small, nice, trembling littlenesses of the miniature style could be traced in his oil pictures: all was broad, massy, and vigorous.

In his twenty-second year a change came upon him; and, as it was occasioned by his genius as well as by his courteous manners, and had much influence over his for-

tunes, we must relate it. Art had been for several years the settled purpose of Raeburn's mind: and to become an accomplished painter, he studied art and nature; and, though he had no desire to forsake the line of portraiture, he loved to make himself acquainted with what was fair in landscape, and also with what was noble in historical composition. With the increase of his reputation, he found the doors of the rich and noble begin to open for his admission to their collections of pictures as well as to their tables; and as he was a diligent student, he missed no opportunity of improving his style, or increasing the natural force of his colouring. Sitters began to wax numerous. One day a young lady presented herself at his studio, and desired to sit for her portrait: he instantly remembered having seen her in some of his excursions, when, with his sketch-book in his hand, he was noting down fine snatches of scenery; and as the appearance of any thing living and lovely gives an additional charm to a landscape, the painter, like Gainsborough in similar circumstances, had admitted her readily into his drawing. This circumstance, it is said, had its influence: on farther acquaintance, he found that, besides personal charms, she had sensibility and wit: his respect for her did not affect his skill of hand, but rather inspired it, and he succeeded in making a fine portrait. The lady, Ann Edgar, the daughter of Peter Edgar, Esquire, of Bridgelands,[1] was much pleased with the skill, and likewise with the manners of the artist; and within a month or so after the adventure of the studio she gave him her hand in marriage; bestowing at once a most affectionate wife and a handsome fortune. This was in the twenty-second year of his age.

Poverty, says the old minstrel, parts good company: it were well if it did no worse; but it forces genius to acts of uncongenial drudgery—crushes down the free spirit, and prevents him from following out the conceptions of his

[1] This lady was a widow when Raeburn married her—the widow of a certain Count Leslie, probably one of the Leslies of Powis, by whom she had had several children. Her father, Peter Edgar, was factor to the Earl of Selkirk, but obtained Bridgelands by marriage.—Ed.

own mind with the vigour necessary for full success. Raeburn was now comparatively rich; his profession of itself was yielding him an income more than equal to his wants; his name was heard of beyond Edinburgh, and he was universally looked upon as one whom genius and fortune had united to raise. But he saw, that to obtain present popularity was one thing, and lasting fame another. The latter, he knew, was not to be gained by such imperfect skill as his, and he resolved to improve himself by studying the best models. He repaired to London; was introduced to Sir Joshua Reynolds; produced some of his portraits; and gained at once, it is said, the favour and friendship of the most discerning and cautious of men. Some one, from this circumstance, has called him the disciple of Sir Joshua; but he never had the honour nor the advantage of studying under him; and, indeed, if he had been admitted to paint in his studio, such was the care with which the President guarded the golden mysteries of his art, that Raeburn would have gained nothing save what his own eyes could glean. He himself ever afterwards mentioned the name of Sir Joshua with much respect—related how he counselled him to study at Rome, and worship Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel; and how he took him aside as they were about to separate, and whispered—"Young man, I know nothing about your circumstances; young painters are seldom rich; but if money be necessary for your studies abroad, say so, and you shall not want it." This generous offer Raeburn declined with due thanks; but he gladly accepted letters of introduction to the most eminent artists and men of science in Rome, and, accompanied by his wife, took his departure for Italy.

I know not that he had laid down any settled plan of study; it would seem that his chief object was to endeavour to acquire a knowledge of those mysteries in colour and in workmanship, in which some imagine more than half the main charm of painting resides. Rome, at that time, had a higher reputation in painting than now; it swarmed, too, with adventurers, who purchased multilated statues, and had their heads, and hands, and feet, and sometimes bodies, restored, as they averred, in the spirit of the original;

men, who dealt largely, too, with that righteous class of artists, who make genuine paintings of the great masters, first studies, second studies, and third studies, and consign them to the conscientious middlemen, through whom so many galleries in England have been stocked. A man, too, of another spirit was there, viz. Gavin Hamilton, a Scottish painter of good family, and of some fame, and, what was more useful to students, of unwearied kindness, and of great influence. To him Raeburn was indebted for many attentions; nor did he find the connoisseurs and regular dealers at all deserving of such distrust and scorn as Barry had regarded them as meriting. On the contrary, he found in Byers—the very individual with whom Barry had such stern and bitter altercation—an adviser of some value; and in after-life, when he spoke of his studies in Rome, he ever said, that to him he owed whatever advantages his visit had brought. The advice of this monitor was no doubt the best—never to copy an object from memory, but, from the principal figure to the minutest accessory, to have it placed before him. To the observance of this rule, Raeburn imputed, in a great measure, those visible improvements which men saw in his works, and that fine natural character which they embodied. With all the advantages which two years' study in Rome, and the sight of so many noble works of art, could give, he returned to Scotland, and in the year 1787 set up his easel in George Street.

The northern city, since the days of Jamesone, had produced no portrait painter worthy of being named with the Lelys, and the Knellers, and the Reynoldses of the capital of the South. Allan Ramsay, son of the poet, and born in Edinburgh in 1709, distinguished himself, as we have already related, in that department; but then he resided chiefly in London. Aikman, the friend of Allan Ramsay the poet, and, what was better still, of Thomson, resided indeed in the North; but his pencil inclined chiefly to history. Gavin Hamilton carried his academic graces of style and his cold and unimpassioned conceptions to the Roman market. John Bogle, a West of Scotland man, excelled in small likenesses; he loved to paint the heads

of ladies, which no one did more gracefully. His portrait of the "Lady Eglington," to whom the "Gentle Shepherd" is addressed, may be compared with any miniature of modern times. He was a little lame man, very poor, very proud, and very singular. Like many of his limner race, he imagined himself of high descent, and claimed, in conversation at least, the earldom of Monteith. David Allan was a painter of rustic life. His old shepherds, his sheepdogs, and the interiors of his cottages, are worthy of all praise; but his shepherdesses were more likely to scare rooks than inspire love. He seldom touched portraits. John Browne excelled in pencil drawings; some of his small heads are of no common merit. Willison, after having been long in India, returned but to die in Edinburgh; he drew indifferently, and coloured worse. Many prints were, nevertheless, made from his works. Skirving, an eccentric man, who desired to be thought singular, and aspired to be a wit and an epigrammatist, though he had studied in Rome, seldom painted in oils, but drew profiles in crayons of great merit. In the rear of this muster-roll we may place Read, a wandering limner, who found his way on a time to Dumfries, where he painted the heads of Burns and his Jean on ivory.[1] Such, with Martin, before mentioned,[2] were the painters, living and dead, to whose list Raeburn now added his name—and all of whom he was destined to eclipse.

Martin was the first to prove the superiority of him whom he formerly insulted; his cold, bloodless features, and formal attitudes, were eclipsed by the breathing heads and bold postures of Raeburn. Commissions passed his door, and found their way to his rival; in vain he prophesied that this fever of approbation could not last; and, like Hudson before him in the case of Sir Joshua, presumptuously declared that "*the lad in George Street*" painted better before he went to Rome. The nation, how-

[1] In the National Portrait Gallery there is a head of Burns, said to be the joint work of Nasmyth and Raeburn.—Ed.

[2] David Martin was the pupil whom, as Cunningham has before related, Allan Ramsay summoned to Italy to show the Romans how Englishmen could paint.—Ed.

ever, persisted in being of another opinion; Martin presently gave up the contest in despair, and retired from the field, where he had been long without a rival. In the eyes of men of taste and feeling, this was the triumph of genius over mediocrity; but the multitude perceived only that an expert manufacturer had succeeded better than one more slovenly or less skilful in pattern and fabric. There was no fighting against the obstinate national prejudice on this head; and it must be owned that the way in which a portrait painter parcels out his time over a given number of sitters, moving from face to face as if it were from chair to chair, conversing on all topics, and making his hand and eye do all the work, go far to support the vulgar belief that this particular branch of the art at least is merely mechanical. The low estimation in which ignorance held his profession never, however, ruffled for a moment the temper of Raeburn; he saw himself at the head of his calling in Scotland, and was happy.

He was now in his thirty-first year; had fine health, high spirits, a gallery worthy of being seen by people of rank and taste; and, what was not less pleasant, the bliss of domestic tranquillity. Though his painting-rooms were in George Street, his dwelling-house was at St. Bernard's, near Stockbridge, overlooking the water of Leith—a romantic place. The steep banks were then finely wooded; the garden grounds varied and beautiful; and all the seclusion of the country could be enjoyed, without the remoteness. The motions of the artist were as regular as those of a clock. He rose at seven during summer, took breakfast about eight with his wife and children, walked into George Street, and was ready for a sitter by nine; and of sitters he generally had, for many years, not fewer than three or four a day. To these he gave an hour and a half each. He seldom kept a sitter more than two hours; unless the person happened—and that was often the case—to be gifted with more than common talents. He then felt himself happy, and never failed to detain the party till the arrival of a new sitter intimated that he must be gone. For a head size he generally required four or five sittings: and he preferred painting the head and

hands to any other part of the body; assigning as a reason, that they required least consideration. A fold of drapery, or the natural ease which the casting of a mantle over the shoulder demanded, occasioned him more perplexing study than a head full of thought and imagination. Such was the intuition with which he penetrated at once to the mind, that the first sitting rarely came to a close without his having seized strongly on the character and disposition of the individual. He never drew in his heads, or indeed any part of the body, with chalk—a system pursued successfully by Lawrence; but began with the brush at once. The forehead, chin, nose, and mouth were his first touches. He always painted standing, and never used a stick for resting his hand on; for such was his accurateness of eye, and steadiness of nerve, that he could introduce the most delicate touches, or the utmost mechanical regularity of line, without aid, or other contrivance than fair, off-hand dexterity. He remained in his painting-room till a little after five o'clock, when he walked home, and dined at six.

This regular system of labour could not fail to produce a great number and variety of works, and likewise bring a very respectable income. But methodical in most matters as he certainly was, and a man who embarked in nothing extravagant, he had an invincible repugnance to keeping either lists of his portraits, or any account of his earnings. The sitters, whether Highland or Lowland, lords or ladies, received their portraits when finished; the charge was made; and the money, if needed, applied to the domestic expenses of his family, or placed in the bank, to work while he slept. This peculiarity—whether we call it culpable carelessness, or magnanimous disregard of lucre, has been very disadvantageous to the biographer. In a word, it has deprived us of all chance to trace with accuracy the history, name, and date, of Raeburn's individual works. He perhaps enjoyed life too much to be very eager about either fame or money. He was happy and charmed, he often said, with the work of the day; and he described portrait painting as the most delightful thing in the world; inasmuch as everybody came to him with their happiest moods and pleasantest faces, and went away

always pleased to see that they looked so well on canvass. He congratulated himself that his profession led neither to discord nor disputes—a circumstance much to the credit of his own tact and prudence; for strife and bitterness find out other brethren of the easel in situations where peace only ought to be. We can easily imagine that a walk on the banks of the river with his wife, or looking at the flowers of his gardens, or sketching landscapes to introduce into the backgrounds of his pictures, might be much more to his taste than the account-book and the ready-reckoner. Indeed, he acknowledged, that in his wanderings during the morning and the evening he saw clouds, and skies, and landscapes, which he brooded upon, and fixed them in his imagination, where they remained till transferred to canvass.

Of his early portraits, that of John Clerk, Lord Eldin, may take rank with his best and latest works. The shrewd, sarcastic look of the original is perfectly preserved. Principal Hill, of St. Andrews, another early portrait, is one of great beauty combined with depth and vigour. These he painted soon after his return from Italy. He was all his life fond of family groups; but as public taste is more with single portraits, he had seldom an opportunity of working in his favourite way. The picture of Sir John and Lady Clerk, of Pennycuick, relations of his friend Lord Eldin, is worthy of notice, both from being a work of his youth, and for the truth and elegance of the likenesses. Poets and painters, from Ramsay to Raeburn, have found that mansion open—the Clerks have been the friends of the genius of Scotland for more than a century.[1] These pieces and others carried the name of Raeburn over Scotland and England; and all who visited Edinburgh became desirous of seeing one whom the newspapers already styled the Reynolds of the North. From one who knew him in his youthful days, and sat to him when he rose in fame, I have this description of his way of going to work. "He spoke a few words to me in his

[1] It will be remembered how kindly they assisted Runciman. It was for Pennycuick Hall that he executed his grand ceiling before described (see "Life of Runciman," p. 216).

usual brief and kindly way—evidently to put me into an agreeable mood; and then having placed me in a chair on a platform at the end of his painting-room, in the posture required, set up his easel beside me with the canvass ready to receive the colour. When he saw all was right, he took his palette and his brush, retreated back step by step, with his face towards me, till he was nigh the other end of his room; he stood and studied for a minute more, then came up to the canvass, and, without looking at me, wrought upon it with colour for some time. Having done this, he retreated in the same manner, studied my looks at that distance for about another minute, then came hastily up to the canvass and painted a few minutes more. I had sat to other artists; their way was quite different—they made an outline carefully in chalk, measured it with compasses, placed the canvass close to me, and looking me almost without ceasing in the face, proceeded to fill up the outline with colour. They succeeded best in the minute detail—Raeburn best in the general result of the expression; they obtained by means of a multitude of little touches what he found by broader masses; they gave more of the man—he gave most of the mind. I may add, that I found him well-informed, with no professional pedantry about him; indeed, no one could have imagined him a painter till he took up the brush and palette; he conversed with me upon mechanics and ship-building, and, if I can depend upon my own imperfect judgment, he had studied ship architecture with great success. On one of the days of my sittings he had to dine with me at the house of a mutual friend; our hour was six, and you know how punctual to time we of the North are; he painted at my portrait till within a quarter of an hour of the time, threw down his palette and brushes, went into a little closet, and in five minutes sallied out to dinner in a trim worthy of the first company. I can remember no more that is noteworthy. I sat six times, and two hours together."

Scotland, during the forty years of Raeburn's labours with the pencil, abounded in eminent men. When he set up his easel on his return from Rome, Burns had just

published his poems, and commenced his glorious and too brief career. Blair, Hailes, Kames, Mackenzie, Woodhouslee, Robertson, Hume, Home, Logan, Monboddo, Boswell, Blacklock, Adam Smith, Hutton, Ferguson, Dugald Stewart, and many others known to fame and distinguished for their wit—were all living in Edinburgh, and mostly in friendly intercourse with each other. Raeburn came therefore in a good time: and he was more aware of this than the brethren of the brush are apt to be of similar advantages. To the great body of mankind the worth of a portrait consists in its faithful delineation mentally and bodily of some person whom fame or history cares about; and they will turn carelessly away from the painting of one of whom they never heard: in short, it is only the heads of distinguished men, or of women more than usually lovely, that they regard at all. Artists, on the other hand, imagine that the fame of the portrait arises from the fine skill and characteristic touch of pencil which it exhibits; and that the work of art, whether it represents genius or stupidity, wisdom or folly, will take its place by its merits as a work of art alone. This is true with regard to works of fancy, but false as respects portraits. Hundreds of heads, exquisite in character and colour, are manufactured annually, to sink, with all their fine art, into oblivion; while the portraits of the heirs of fame are treasured and prized, without much reference to the merits of outline and colour. Raeburn had the good sense to be one of the popular, rather than the professional opinion, as to this matter: with the exception of Burns and one or two more, he painted all the eminent men of his time and nation; and a gallery of the illustrious heads of a most brilliant period might almost be completed from his works alone.

Of the portraits which he painted from 1787 to 1795, I can obtain no better account than the general one I have rendered; even the catalogues of the Academy give me no assistance: for it was much the practice in those days to announce all likenesses as portraits of ladies or of gentlemen merely; Raeburn had, however, painted many; for he was already growing rich, and sitters were increasing

so in numbers, that he was obliged to leave his rooms in George Street for a more spacious house in York Place. As art requires peculiar accommodation, he was obliged to build for himself; but this he was quite prepared to do: architecture had been for some time a favourite study; and with better success, because with better knowledge, than Romney, he planned and built, and in the year 1795 took possession of, his new gallery. This structure stands in one of the best frequented streets of the New Town, and consists of a sunk storey for domestic accommodation, a ground floor containing the painting-rooms, with a storey above formed into one fine gallery fifty-five feet long, thirty-five feet wide, and forty feet high, lighted from the roof. On the walls of this stately apartment he hung his works when finished; and the doors were opened to all who had taste or curiosity. I remember, some twenty-three years ago, finding my way into this place. My astonishment was beyond the power of painting to express: I had never seen works of art, or at least of genius, before, and had no conception of the spirit and mind which colours could embody. I was much struck at the first glance with some Highland chiefs,

"All plaided and plumed in their tartan array,"

whose picturesque dress and martial bearing contrasted finely with the graver costume and sterner brows of the Lowlanders. What I next dwelt on was several family groups of ladies and children, with snatches of landscape behind, where streams descended through wild woods or loitered in little holms. But that on which my mind finally settled, was the visible capacity for thought which most of the heads had, together with their massive and somewhat gloomy splendour of colouring. The artist came in and said a word or two in a low tone of voice: some one was probably sitting, for he had his palette on his thumb.

Before he entered upon his new studio, the race of great men whom I have named had nearly all passed away; and another generation, not inferior in intellect or in fame, but of a different taste, were rising in their room. The great

revolution, whose leaven was heaving and working in the bosoms of all ranks, lent its electrical influence to literature, and vigour and audacity, strong light and shade, and natural emotion, became all in all in poetry. Criticism, of late so timid and respectful, assumed a fierce and swaggering air; and a series of new publications, conducted with great talent, and with still greater boldness, laid the foundation of that power which, like fire, may prove a good servant but a bad master.

With this revolution in literature Raeburn had little to do; his colours were of a kind which suited all complexions; and Whig and Tory were alike the visitors of his easel. It brought a new dynasty of intellectual heads to aid him in establishing his name; and he had the good fortune to be the comrade and friend of the chief of the old and the new schools, and to connect his art with both. Lawrence and his associates were all powerful in the South, and the Exhibitions were filled with their heads: but Raeburn reigned undisputed king of art in the North; and though clever artists began to make their appearance, his pre-eminence was never for a moment disputed. Now and then a Scotsman sat to the London artists; but their nationality allowed few to seek further than Edinburgh; and Raeburn had all but a monopoly of Scotland, both mainland and isle, to the end of his days.

Of his portraits of the eminent men of the North, a short account is all I can give; brief as it is it has been collected from many sources; the painter's own memorandums referring to mechanical problems, and not to works of art, and the Royal Academy catalogues recording no names. The first on the list is that full-length of Sir Walter Scott, in which the great poet is sitting on some fragments of Gothic masonry, with one foot a little raised above the other, two favourite greyhounds, "Douglas" and "Percy," at his side, and the "braes of Yarrow" for a background. The resemblance was great; and the picture excited so much attention at the London Exhibition that an engraver was tempted to speculate upon a mezzotinto print from it. The success of this attempt was told me by the artist in these words, on the day the print was

published:—"The thing is damned, sir—gone—sunk: nothing could be more unfortunate: when I put up my Scott for sale, another man put up his Molyneux. You know the taste of our London beer-suckers: one black bruiser is worth one thousand bright poets; the African sells in thousands, and the Caledonian won't move;—a dead loss, sir—gone, damned; won't do." [1] This fine portrait was painted, I believe, for Constable the bookseller; but it is now in the gallery of Dalkeith palace. Another, of nearly similar character and dimensions, was executed a few years after for the poet himself, and is at Abbotsford. A very picturesque terrier, "Camp," appears in place of the greyhounds; otherwise there is little difference.[2] The Rev. Sir Henry Moncrieff Welwood, Bart., a Presbyterian divine of great worth and authority, sat in the year 1810, about the same time with Scott: his portrait was in the Royal Academy Exhibition. The fame of Dugald Stewart made his portrait an object of great curiosity; and the painter seems to have been aware of what was looked for: it is a vigorous production. Pro-

[1] The engraver in question was, I believe, Cromek, and the sentence quoted reads so much like one of that worthy's, that I cannot help thinking that Allan Cunningham had the story from him, and not from Raeburn. Lockhart, writing of this portrait in his life of Scott, says that it was painted in 1808 for Constable, and passed at the sale of his effects into the possession of the Duke of Buccleuch. It has since been repeatedly engraved.—ED.

[2] Cunningham is mistaken here: Camp appears alone in the first picture, and the two greyhounds in addition in the second. All through Cunningham is describing the Abbotsford, and not the Buccleuch example. It would appear that, in 1819, the Duke of Buccleuch wished Scott and Maida to sit to Raeburn. He wrote to Scott to this effect, saying, however, "Raeburn should be warned that I am as well acquainted with my friend's hands and arms as with his nose—and Vandyck was of my opinion. Many of R.'s works are shamefully finished—the face studied, but everything else neglected. This is a fair opportunity of producing something really worthy of his skill." To which Scott replied, "I hesitate a little about Raeburn unless your Grace is quite determined. He has very much to do; works just now (April 15, 1819) chiefly for cash, poor fellow, as he can have but a few years to make money, and has twice already made a very chowder-headed person of me. I should like much to try Allan, who is a man of real genius, and has made one or two glorious portraits" (Lockhart's "Life of Scott").—ED.

fessor Playfair had a peculiar face, impressed with much thought: I judge from his bust by Chantrey, for I never saw him: his portrait, which followed that of Stewart, found many admirers. The Lord President Hope was painted about the same time; and a more lofty specimen of the dignified judge was never, I think, produced. Francis Horner, who died too soon for his country, sat also, and the likeness was very successful; it aided Chantrey in modelling the head of his fine statue of that lamented statesman. The head of Francis Jeffrey, a stern critic, but a kind-hearted man, shows much of the intellectual sharpness of the original. That of the Rev. Archibald Alison is grave, gentle, and full of thought. That of Henry Mackenzie, though full of years, has poetry and serenity of mind. The head of the Hon. Henry Erskine preserves all the fire and grace of the noble original.[1] That of Henry Cockburn is perhaps a shade too solemn, but art should incline to gravity. The heads of the two Lords Meadowbank, father and son, are among Raeburn's best and most characteristic pieces. That of John Rennie is manly, vigorous; a fine specimen, as the man himself was, of bodily and mental power. These were almost all half-lengths, and painted out of love for genius; they form at present a little gallery of the heads of eminent Scotsmen; and when the government has the fortitude to form a national collection, these ought, if possible, to be purchased and placed in the public sanctuary.

During the period in which he took the portraits of these literary men and eminent lawyers, he did not altogether neglect the children of art. He painted the head of Chantrey the sculptor, and gave it away in these words: —"Tell my friend, Mrs. Chantrey, that I will, in a few days, send up her picture: but do not think of sending an order in payment, as you proposed; for if you do I will

[1] This fine portrait of the Lord Advocate of Scotland appeared at the "Old Masters" Exhibition at Burlington House in 1873. It was lent by Mrs. Wilbraham Tollemache. Several other of Raeburn's portraits, all good powerful paintings, have appeared from time to time at the "Old Masters" exhibitions.—Ed.

infallibly send it back again by next post, and that would put both you and me to the expense of double postage." The painter was much less satisfied with this head than it deserved; it was an excellent likeness; and the sentiment neither too solemn nor too smiling, but in that tranquil medium which is most becoming, and also most rare. He painted likewise the singularly handsome and intellectual head of Hugh Williams, the artist and traveller, a man whose amiable character, elegant manners, and charming conversation are still mentioned with warm and affectionate regret by many friends; and whose exquisite drawings of Grecian scenery have been well engraved, and form the best of all illustrations for Childe Harold.[1] The third and last artist whom he painted was himself; and I know not that he ever succeeded better, We have now a fair number of the busts and portraits of poets, painters, sculptors, architects, historians, and men of science, who have made our age famous, and it would be well if they were gathered together and placed in some secure situation.

We have alluded to Raeburn's knowledge in architecture; he soon found an ample opportunity of trying his theories in practice. The creation of the new city of Edinburgh amid cornfields and copses, where grouse and blackcocks have been sought for with dog and gun, within the memory of men still living, awakened a spirit for architectural adventure amongst the people. Among others, Raeburn, having, in addition to his paternal inheritance at St. Bernard's, become proprietor of some fields on its north side, resolved to better his fortune by building; and accordingly planned and raised that beautiful suburb at

[1] This artist's talents would have justified a separate notice of his life; but I can hear no particulars, except that he was a Welshman by birth, and of claims to high extraction in the principality—that he early settled in Edinburgh, and became a first-rate favourite there—travelled in his middle life through Greece and Italy—married a lady of good family and fortune, a Miss Miller of Garnock, soon after his return to Scotland from these classic wanderings, and did not long survive his marriage. He seems to have been too worthy, respectable, and fortunate a man to leave many materials for biography. There is an enthusiastic account of his Grecian gallery in "Peter's Letters."

Stockbridge, to which the New Town of Edinburgh has since united itself, and which, I believe, is called after him Raeburnville. This new passion lasted for his whole life; and so generally was his love for plans and buildings known, that when Allan exhibited that fine picture of his, in which he has collected most of the men of genius in Edinburgh round the humble but hearty board of the Ettrick Shepherd, the allusion was perfectly well understood, when he made Raeburn, in the middle of one of Professor Wilson's wittiest sallies which was setting the circle in a roar, quietly trace the foundation plans of his new town with his wet forefinger upon the table.

His love of building led to other matters, which could not but disturb the serenity of his life: he had let out his ground to numerous speculators: some of whom, from a difference of taste or regardlessness for specifications, hazarded a departure from the letter of their bargains; and he was obliged to have recourse to law to bring them to reason. It has been alleged that he not only displayed great acuteness in this, to him, new field of inquiry, but also inoculated himself with a sort of abstract love for the subtle science of the law, which never altogether subsided. Certainly, if his case required such applications, he was surrounded with remedies; but the Spanish prelate recovered of a dangerous illness from not living in the neighbourhood of any doctor, and it might probably have been as well for the outward estate of the painter, if Stockbridge had been further from the haunts of eminent writers to the signet and eloquent advocates. Be that as it may, he loved architecture and he loved the law. I have often heard a skilful builder speak of Raeburn's intimate acquaintance with all the economy of a structure; and he usually concluded with, "Ah! he was a wonderful man." Nor was a witty lawyer of my acquaintance, long disciplined in Scottish law, less rapturous about the delight which the painter took in his own learned profession. "Of all our clients he was the most enthusiastic, and at the same time the most acute and shrewd. He dearly loved a *ganging* plea, and smiled to see difficulties arise which promised a new case. He was, as Prior says of

another matter, 'a great lover of that same:' but do not misunderstand me; he desired to oppress no one, and never waged war but for his own right, and to keep his plans free from blemish, perfect as he had laid them down."

He had now seen out fifty-eight years; his pictures had borne his name far and wide; his family, of whom he had both sons and daughters, had grown up around him; and he lived on terms of intimacy or friendship with many of the first men of the age. No academy, either in England or in foreign parts, however, had yet admitted him as a member; and I have some suspicion that he was uneasy at the circumstance. The Royal Academy of London then only had one Scotsman on their list; and it had often been said that they opened their doors reluctantly to the artists of the North. He thus writes, in 1814, to one of his brethren, since become a distinguished member:—"I observe what you say respecting the election of an R.A.; but what am I to do here? They know I am on their list: if they choose to elect me without solicitation, it will be the more honourable to me, and I will think the more of it; but if it can only be obtained by means of solicitation and canvassing, I must give up all hopes of it, for I would think it unfair to employ those means. I am besides out of the way, and have no opportunity. I rejoice in the worthy President's increasing reputation: it is pleasing and consolatory to see that additional powers come with the increase of years. Write and tell me what artists are about, and whether anything be indispensable for a person who desires to become a member of the Royal Academy. Were you sufficiently in health to see Somerset House during last Exhibition? I had some things there; but no artist of my acquaintance has been kind enough to write me one syllable on the subject, to say either what he thought of them himself, or what others thought." The pictures to which he alludes were four in number: one was "a lady"—he seldom excelled in the soft graces of style and sentiment suitable to ladies; another was "a gentleman"—no one ever heeds a portrait that has no name: the others were works of a high order, portraits of

Lord Seaforth and Sir David Baird. What effect these two noble portraits had I know not; but before 1814 closed Raeburn was at length an associate, and in the succeeding year a Royal Academician. He was in London only thrice in his whole life, and it was on this occasion that he paid it his last visit: he was welcomed warmly by all his brethren; and by none more than by Wilkie, who had used all his influence in his election. It is one of the laws of the Academy that a new member shall present to their gallery a work of art from his own pencil; and Raeburn presented, but not till 1821, a picture of "A Boy and Rabbit." No artist seems willing to give one of his best works: they perhaps consider it as a disagreeable tax, which may as well be paid with inferior coin.

Other honours, of the same nature, and from distant lands, now awaited him. He was made a member of the Imperial Academy of Florence. This has a pleasing sound: but Florence is other than she was when her Academy was founded. Her towers are occupied by strangers: her fame in art has fallen to the ground;[1] and he who unites himself to her perishing fame obtains a title of little estimation in the world, and gives in return a portrait of himself by his own hand,—a shrewd rule, which has filled the gallery with heads of all the chief painters of the world. On the 1st of June, 1817, he was elected an honorary member of the Academy of the Fine Arts at New York:—a rising institution of a rising state. The secretary, Robertson, says, in his intimation to Raeburn of this trans-Atlantic honour, that "the institution is in a flourishing condition, and the collection of paintings is rapidly increasing. In addition to such pictures as the funds of the Society permit it to purchase, the friendly donations of many of the honorary members will enable it to boast of specimens of most of the distinguished artists of our day." In November, 1821, he was elected an honorary member of the Academy of Arts in South Carolina. The communication of Cogdell, the secretary, is in a strain more to our liking than that of his brother

[1] Allan Cunningham would probably not have written this of the Florence of to-day.—Ed.

secretary of New York: no hint of the donations of works by new members. We wish success to a modest institution, which has the sense to say to such a man as Raeburn —"Your character and talents have been our admiration for many years: we have named you an honorary member of our institution; and should you accept it, you will confer a favour on us." Our painter was also admitted a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; an honour which, I presume, he could not have aspired to had he not been entitled to distinction for general accomplishments and extra-professional acquirements.

Meanwhile Raeburn was busy at his easel, busy with the line and plummet, and busy with experiments in the construction of ships. Of the former we shall speak first. The academic honours which he obtained, though they neither increased his skill of hand, nor inspired him with a new ardour, appear to have extended his already ample practice; and from that time forward he was a regular contributor to the Royal Academy Exhibition of portraits from the chief families of the North. He became a favourite with all who wore tartan; and it must be owned that the air of loftiness and rapt-up thought which he bestowed on his heads, suited well with the characters of those mountain chiefs. Macdonnells, Mackenzies, Campbells, Bruces, Hays, Scotts, Duffs, Gordons, Douglasses, Hamiltons, and many more, whose names are concealed under the common veil of ladies and gentlemen, appeared in the Royal Academy Exhibition and attracted much notice. Their massive and vigorous style of colouring, and the poetical way of giving much light amid much darkness, distinguished them from all other portraits in the Exhibition. The notice which they obtained, and the feeling that the metropolis was the proper field for a man of genius, induced Raeburn, thus late in life, to think of establishing himself in London. On this delicate point he consulted Sir Thomas Lawrence. I know not by what train of reasoning Lawrence succeeded in persuading his fellow-labourer in portraiture to content himself with his Scottish practice. He did, however, succeed: and though Raeburn never expressly said it, he sometimes, I am told,

seemed to insinuate, in conversations at his own fireside, that the President of the Royal Academy had been no loser by his absence from the field of competition.[1]

Those who only look at Raeburn as a portrait painter do him much injustice. He was an adventurer in experiments both by water and land. He had considerable skill in gardening. He was a learned and enthusiastic florist, and to the mysteries of hot-houses, flues, &c., he dedicated many experiments. To his love for maritime architecture we have more than once alluded. He made many models with his own hands,—neat, clean-built, ingenious things, all about three feet long in the keel; and it was his pleasure to try their merits frequently in Wariston Pond. On one occasion, not long before his death, he had pushed his model from the side, where the water was deep; and on stretching out his hands to adjust a rope he fell forward into the pond, and Cameron, his servant, rescued him with difficulty. I must not omit that he was one of those sanguine experimentalists who imagine there is an undiscovered power called the Perpetual Motion; and to a search for this he devoted in vain many an evening hour. To conclude, Raeburn was a scientific and skilful angler, and went often a trouting in his native streams: he loved to refresh his eyes, too, with the sight of nature, and inclined to wander by himself on the banks of brooks, and by the wooded hill. He loved to make long excursions among the distant glens and romantic woods of his native land, and sometimes did not return for weeks: his son Henry, on such occasions, accompanied

[1] It would seem certainly that Raeburn had at one time an idea of settling in London, for Wilkie writes in his diary, "May 12, 1810. Had a call from Raeburn, who told me he had come to London to look out for a house, and to see if there was any prospect of establishing himself. I took him, by his own desire, to see Sir William Beechey." Again: "May 13. Called with Raeburn on several artists, who happened to be from home or 'engaged.'—May 21. Raeburn called, and I accompanied him to Newman Street, where we saw Stothard.—1810. June 4. Went with Raeburn to the 'Crown and Anchor' to meet the gentlemen of the Royal Academy. I introduced him to Flaxman. After dinner he was asked by Beechey to sit near the President, when his health was proposed by Flaxman. Great attention was paid to him." (Wilkie's "Journal.")—Ed.

him. Sketches of landscapes for his backgrounds were the offspring of those summer rambles.

Meantime the older he grew, his knowledge of art and his skill in handling seemed to increase. Critics and connoisseurs united in averring that he had now carried his own peculiar style as high as possible; and though one objected to his azure back-grounds, another to the want of detail in the lineaments of his faces, and a third to his daring distribution of light and shade, they all concurred in thinking him second to none in manliness and vigour of mind. Wilkie loved his fine depth of colour; and Northcote, whom intimacy with Reynolds had made fastidious, declared that Raeburn's style of painting was the happiest of the present day. The pictures which called forth these eulogiums were perhaps, intrinsically, second to none at that time exhibited; but they were, moreover, in a new and peculiar style, and when will Novelty cease to have her charms? There were, however, heresies in Raeburn's times, which certain of our Royal Academicians desired to root out. One of them addressed him on the subject in a style at once bold and agreeable. "I congratulate you," he said, "on the great improvements which you have made in the back-grounds of your pictures. The spell that has been upon you for many years is broken, and Raeburn is himself again. Your pictures are now altogether beautiful. There is no beautiful head and finely executed figure ruined by a systematic back-ground; everything is in harmony, and your subject has fair play. I wish you could see the difference between your other earlier works and these. I suppose there is no more Prussian blue to be had in Scotland, and all your Naples yellow is used up; or perhaps the climate of Edinburgh is altered for the better. I beg you to pardon this forwardness; I have ever felt a great interest in your reputation, and been much mortified when, year after year, you persisted in a manner that was so disadvantageous to your fame. Pursue your *present plan*, and your immortality is certain."[1] In truth, the changes which the writer perceived

[1] This honest critic was no doubt Wilkie, from whom probably Allan Cunningham gathered much of the information of this biography.—Ed.

in the back-grounds had been made in obedience to the reiterated remonstrances of friends in London, and were in accordance with a taste which Raeburn called, without hesitation, corrupt and unnatural. He condemned the alterations, and said he had changed nature for affectation.

When the autumn of 1822 brought King George IV. to Scotland, Raeburn was in the 67th year of his age, and hale and vigorous; dividing his time between his studio, his gardens, his scientific experiments, and the pleasures of domestic society. He was desirous of welcoming his Majesty to the North, and was about to be presented, when he received the following unexpected intimation from Mr. Secretary (afterwards Sir Robert) Peel:—"I beg leave to acquaint you that it is his Majesty's intention to confer on you the honour of knighthood, as a mark of his approbation of your distinguished merit as a painter." He went next day, accordingly, to Hopetoun House—the company in the grand saloon were of the noblest of Scotland—the King made use of the sword of Sir Alexander Hope, and the artist rose up Sir Henry Raeburn. In the opinion of all who loved the arts, the honour of knighthood had never been more worthily bestowed: there was no small rejoicing among his brethren in Edinburgh; and on the 5th of October they treated him with a public dinner, and, through their chairman, the venerable Alexander Nasmyth, declared that they loved him as a man not less than they admired him as an artist. He answered modestly, that he was glad of their approbation, and had tried to merit it; for he had never indulged in a mean or selfish spirit towards any brother artist, nor had at any time withheld the praise which was due to them when their works happened to be mentioned. In the following May the King appointed him his "limner and painter in Scotland, with all fees, profits, salaries, rights, privileges and advantages thereto belonging."

The extent of those rights and privileges, and the value of those fees and profits, this eminent painter had never an opportunity of ascertaining; he was seized with a mortal sickness, and had laid down his head to die on the very day that the nomination was announced. "Although

Sir Henry," says one of his biographers, "had reached the decline of life, yet his vigorous constitution, fortified by habitual temperance, gave a reasonable hope of his being for some time preserved to his friends and to the world. He appeared to enjoy the most perfect health, and was just returned from an excursion into Fifeshire with Sir Walter Scott, Sir Samuel Shepherd, Sir Adam Ferguson, and a small party of friends, united under the auspices of Lord Chief Commissioner Adam, to visit and examine objects of historical curiosity and interest.[1] None of the party had seemed to enjoy the excursion more than Sir Henry. He appeared in his usual vigour both of body and mind; visited with enthusiasm the ancient ruins of St. Andrew's, of Pittenweem, and other remains of antiquity; and contributed largely to the enjoyment of the party. On his return home Sir Walter Scott sat to him in order that he might finish two portraits,—one for the artist's own private gallery, and the other for the poet's noble friend and clansman Lord Montague. These were the last pictures which the pencil of this eminent master

[1] Morrison, in his "Reminiscences," published in "Tait's Magazine," 1843, records that during this excursion the weather was very hot, and Raeburn, unaccustomed to long walking, took cold. "He walked," as Sir Walter Scott observed, "with his hat in his hand, Miss Edgeworth having hold of his other arm. On the day after his return he walked to his gallery in York Place, and proceeded to touch the portrait of Mrs. Dennistoun, but was unable to proceed. He walked home, and with considerable headache went to bed, from whence he never rose more." If this account be correct, Raeburn could not have painted his third portrait of Sir Walter Scott, which was painted, as stated, for Lord Montague, and is still, I believe, at Ditton Park at this time. It was, in truth, painted a year previously, in 1822. It gives the great author a somewhat heavy look, such as he complained of in his former portraits; but the eyes are deep and expressive. It has been engraved in mezzotint by Walker. Scott, speaking afterwards of Raeburn to Morrison, said, "I never knew Raeburn, I may say, till during his painting my last portrait. His conversation was rich, and he told his story well. His manly stride backwards, as he went to contemplate his work at a proper distance, and when resolved on the necessary point to be touched, his step forward was magnificent. I see him, in my mind's eye, with his hand under his chin, contemplating his picture; which position always brought me in mind of a figure of Jupiter which I have somewhere seen." ("Tait's Magazine," Dec. 1843.)—Ed.

ever touched; a subject of affectionate regret to the great genius represented, who had been long his friend. Within a day or two of his return he was suddenly affected with a general decay and debility; all medical skill was in vain; and after a short week's illness, during which no distinct symptom appeared, he died on the 8th of July, 1823, in the 68th year of his age.

The character of Raeburn appears to have been every way unblemished; he was a candid, modest man, ever ready to aid merit, and give a helping hand to genius in art. His varied knowledge, his agreeable manners, his numerous anecdotes, and his general conversation, at once easy and unaffected, with now and then a touch of humorous gaiety, made him a delightful companion; he told a Scotch story with almost unrivalled *naïveté* of effect; and did the honours of a handsome house and elegant table with all the grace of a high-bred gentleman. Through life he discharged, with blameless attention, all the duties of a good citizen. His pencil never kept him from his place in church on Sunday, and in the days of trouble he was a zealous volunteer. First and last, among all the children of art no one was ever more widely respected than Sir Henry Raeburn; and his tall, handsome figure, and fine open, manly countenance, will not be forgotten for many a day in "the place which knew him."

His merits as a portrait painter are very great. He aimed at elevation and dignity of style; he desired to bring out the mental qualities of his sitters, and considered the nice detail of the features as unworthy of a work of art. The distant view he took presented nature to him in its grandest expression; and he caught the ruling passion of the face by taking the broad result, and not the detail. This was, no doubt, a dangerous experiment, and succeeded best with heads of natural dignity: by neglecting the lesser features, all subordinate expression was sunk; it was the application of the historical style to humble purposes, and Raeburn may be accused of conferring intellectual dignity upon heads unworthy of such honour. One of his greatest triumphs is in his last portrait of Sir Walter Scott: the face of this illustrious man is far from expressing his

powers when you are at his elbow; but the distance at which Raeburn sought the character lent enchantment at once, and in the light and shade of his masses the author of "Marmion" and "Old Mortality" appeared. In expressing female loveliness he seldom excelled. "Surely," says a correspondent in whose judgment I put much trust, "no one could hit off an evil-favoured Scotch professor, or uncouth Lord of Session, with more celerity and effect; but in representing beauty he always appeared to me to fail fearfully; his style of colouring, and his indefinite outline, caught neither the roses and lilies, nor the contour of youth and loveliness. Besides, he hoisted people up when they sat to him on a high platform, which always shortens the features, and gives a pigeon-hole view of the nostrils. The notion is, that people should be painted as if they were hanging like pictures on the wall; a Newgate notion, but it was Sir Joshua's. Raeburn and I have had good-humoured disputes about this: I appealed to Titian, Vandyke, &c. for my authorities; they always painted people as if they were sitting opposite to them, not on a mountebank stage or dangling on the wall." A list, with dates, of the portraits of this northern master is much to be desired; the heads which he exhibited in London amount to little more than fifty: in the course of forty years' labour he must have painted many hundreds.[1]

By his lady, who survives him, Sir Henry Raeburn had

[1] Raeburn's honest manly style of portraiture, "without fal-de-lal or fiddle-de-dee," as Constable said of his own painting, has preserved his reputation unto the present day, his portraits being still greatly esteemed. Of course they have not the subtle charm of Sir Joshua, the airy grace of Gainsborough, or the elegance of Sir Thomas Lawrence; but they are good powerful works, with an amount of character in them that redeems them from being uninteresting, as portraits that are not pictures usually are. An exhibition of his works was held in 1876, at the Academy Galleries in Edinburgh, to which a great many Scotch noblemen and gentlemen contributed. Nearly 400 portraits were collected for this exhibition, which, if it did not increase, at least did nothing to lessen his reputation. Raeburn's portrait of his wife was sold in London, a short time ago, for the sum of 610 guineas, and it was said that it had fetched even a higher sum within the last few years. Though not celebrated for his female portraits, this was a very pleasant example of his art.—Ed.

two sons. The eldest, a fine youth with much of his father's genius, died at the age of nineteen. Henry, the second son, is married and has a family; he inherits, of course, the villa of Stockbridge, lives in the house where his father died, and has many of his works in his keeping —not the least valuable being various heads of men of genius in science, letters, and art, with whom the great painter had lived on terms of intimacy.

HOPPNER.

JOHN HOPPNER was born in London some time in the summer of 1759.[1] There is a mystery about his birth, which no one has ventured to explain: all that is known with certainty is, that his mother was one of the German attendants at the Royal Palace. The King caused the child to be carefully nursed and well educated; when he grew up, as his voice was sweet and melodious, he was made one of the choristers in the Royal Chapel. All this benevolence was misunderstood. George III. was pious and generous, and such acts of kindness became him; but slanderers were not wanting to insinuate that his Majesty had good natural reasons for all this tenderness; and it is said that some such gossips actually possessed the boy himself with a notion of very lofty parentage. I believe there is no doubt that, when he grew up, he was willing to have it understood that he owed something more than his nursing and education to the throne. This was most probably the mere *ruse* of a shrewd man, who felt how much such a surmise would help his fortune; but it received some sort of countenance from the very active patronage of the Prince of Wales (George IV.) who supported him against the rising fame of Lawrence and Owen, and the settled reputation of Opie, and crowded his studio with princes, peers, and fine ladies.

Of the boyish studies of Hoppner we have heard little on which we can rely. He availed himself of the advantages held out by the Royal Academy; and entering a

[1] Samuel Redgrave, in his Dictionary, gives the date of his birth as April 4, 1758, and states that his father was a German settled in Whitechapel, paying no heed to the stories that prevailed regarding him, which were probably as untrue as such scandals are usually found to be when examined.—Ed.

probationer with his chalk and paper, ascended slowly and systematically through all the steps required, till, with paint on his palette, and a brush in his hand, he contended for the highest prizes of the institution.[1] With such success did he study, and so fortunate was he in his sketches and his early attempts that, before his twenty-fourth year,[2] he was looked upon as one likely to become great in landscape, and who already painted heads in a way worthy of a more established name. As soon as it was safe as a matter of taste to befriend him, he found patrons, and powerful ones. Mrs. Jordan sat to him, in the character of the Comic Muse, supported by that

—— "goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclep'd Euphrosyne,"

to whom the artist confided the task of repelling the advances of a satyr. We know not what might be meant by this; but the work was much liked.[3] The fair dame sat again as "Hippolite." Another was a lady of quality shadowed forth under the no very flattering name of a Bacchante; but as the colours were glowing, and the face lovely, the audacity of the name might be forgiven. Then followed the portraits of the Duke of York, of his Duchess, of the Prince of Wales, and the Duke of Clarence, afterwards King William IV., with ladies of quality and noblemen not a few, and gentlemen without number. His time, however, was not as yet so occupied with sitters as to hinder him from continuing to work in what artists technically call the "fancy way." A "Sleeping Venus," a

[1] He was admitted as a student of the Royal Academy in 1775, and in 1782 gained the gold medal for a painting from "King Lear."—Ed.

[2] He married at about this age a Miss Wright, whose mother was celebrated for her portraits, modelled in wax, and whose house in Pall Mall was the resort of much of the intellect and fashion of that time. Lord Camden, Dr. Franklin, Garrick, Samuel Foote, Dr. Dodd, and Benjamin West were among the celebrities who used to meet there, and hold learned conversation with their hostess, who is spoken of as "a woman of masculine understanding." His mother-in-law's influence may thus very possibly have had something to do with Hoppner's rapid success.—Ed.

[3] This work is now at Hampton Court.—Ed.

"Belisarius," "Youth and Age," and other productions, half natural and half ideal, belong to his early days.

All this, and much more, had befallen him before his thirtieth year, and as his colouring was rich, and his style of portraiture captivating to the vain side of human nature, his commissions increased in number, money poured in, and fame grew and spread. The light of the Prince of Wales's countenance was of itself sufficient to guide the courtly and the beautiful to his easel. Suffice it to say that, before he was forty years of age, he had been enabled to exhibit no less than fifteen ladies of quality, for so are they named in the catalogues; a score of ladies of lower degree,—and noblemen unnumbered. By this time another court star had arisen, destined to outshine that of Hoppner, though some, at that period, willing to flatter the older practitioner, called it a meteor that would but flash and disappear,—we allude to Lawrence. Urged upon the Academy by the King and Queen, and handed up to notice by royal favour, this new aspirant rose rapidly in the estimation of the public; and by the most delicate flattery, both with tongue and pencil, became a formidable rival to the painter whom it was the Prince's pleasure to befriend. The factions of Reynolds and Romney seemed revived in those of Hoppner and Lawrence. If Hoppner resided in Charles Street, at the gates of Carlton House, and wrote himself "portrait painter to the Prince of Wales," Lawrence likewise had his residence in the court end of the town, and proudly styled himself, and that when only twenty-three years old, "portrait painter in ordinary to his Majesty." In other respects, too, were honours equally balanced between them: they were both made Royal Academicians; but in this, youth had the start of age—Lawrence obtained that distinction first.[1] Nature, too, had been kind—some have said, prodigal—to both; they were men of fine address, and polished by early intercourse with the world, and, by their trade of portrait painting, could practice all the delicate courtesies of drawing-room and

[1] Lawrence was made Associate in 1791 at the age of twenty-two, and R.A. in 1794. Hoppner was elected Associate in 1793, aged thirty-five, and R.A. 1795.—Ed.

boudoir: but in that most fascinating of all flattery, the art of persuading with brushes and fine colours very ordinary mortals that beauty and fine expression were their portions, Lawrence was soon without a rival.

The preference of the King and Queen was for a time balanced by the affection of the Prince of Wales: the latter was supposed to have the best taste; and as he kept a court of his own, filled with young nobility and all the wits of that great faction known by the name of Whig, Hoppner had the youth and beauty of the land for a time; and it cannot be denied that he was a rival every way worthy of contending with any portrait painter of his day. The bare list of his exhibited portraits will show how and by whom he was supported: to twenty ladies of quality, who lent their looks but withheld their names,[1] we may add the following:—1. The Countess of Clare; 2. the Hon. Miss Chetwynd; 3. Lady Anne Lambton; 4. Countess of Oxford; 5. Hon. Mrs. Edward Bouverie; 6. Mrs. Whitbread; 7. Miss Grimstone; 8. Lady Grenville; 9. Lady Mildmay; 10. Lady E. Bligh; 11. Miss Cholmondley; 12. Lady Mulgrave; 13. Hon. Miss Mercer; 14. Mrs. Jerningham; 15. Mrs. Manning; 16. Miss St. Clair; 17. Countess of Essex; 18. Lady Melbourne; 19. the Countess of Sutherland. It is well said by Williams, in his life of Lawrence, that "the more sober and homely idea of the King were not likely to be a passport for any portrait painter to the vanity of ladies; and hence Mr. Hoppner for a long time almost monopolised the female beauty and young fashion of the country." He had his share, too, of the men. In the period of time (six years) over which the list we have given of beauty extended, he had the following male sitters:—1. The Bishop of Durham; 2. Bishop of Carlisle; 3. Duke of Grafton; 4. Lord Camden; 5. Sir Arthur Wellesley; 6. Sir William Scott; 7. Right Hon. H. B. Frere; 8. Lord King; 9. Right Hon.

[1] It was in 1798 that the fashion arose for putting the names of the persons represented to the portraits exhibited by artists. Before that date it is exceedingly difficult to identify the vague portraits of "ladies" and "gentlemen" who appear in the catalogue. In 1798 Hoppner exhibited twelve portraits, affixing the full names and titles to all, and Lawrence, Beechey, and Shee did the same.—Ed.

T. Grenville; 10. Lord Hawkesbury; 11. Right Hon. C. Long; 12. Sir Samuel Hood; 13. Earl of Essex; 14. Sir George Beaumont; 15. Earl Spencer; 16. Earl St. Vincent; 17. Earl of Chatham; 18. Duke of Rutland; 19. Archbishop of York; 20. the Prince of Wales. The Duke of York's portrait was painted twice; the Duke of Clarence thrice; and the Prince of Wales thrice.[1]

This rivalry of the court painters continued for a time in the spirit of moderation; that spiteful courtesy which the world teaches,

"Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,"

was visible between them. Lawrence, the gentler and the smoother of the two, kept silence longest; the warm nature of Hoppner broke out at last. "The ladies of Lawrence," said he, "show a gaudy dissoluteness of taste, and sometimes trespass on moral, as well as on professional chastity." For his own he claimed, by implication, purity of look as well as purity of style. This sarcastic remark found wings in a moment, and flew through all coteries and through both courts; it did most harm to him who uttered it: all men laughed, and then began to wonder how Lawrence, limner to perhaps the purest court in Europe, came to bestow lascivious looks on the meek and sedate ladies of quality about St. James's and Windsor, while Hoppner, limner to the court of a gallant young prince, who loved mirth and wine, the sound of the lute, and the music of ladies' feet in the dance, should, to some of its gayest and giddiest ornaments, give the simplicity of manner and purity of style which pertained to the quaker-like sobriety of the other. Nor is it the least curious part of this story, that the ladies, from the moment of the sarcasm of Hoppner, instead of crowding to the easel of him who dealt in the loveliness of virtue, showed a growing preference for the rival who "trespassed on moral as well as on professional chastity." After this,

[1] To these may be added Lord Nelson, full length, Lord Rodney, William Pitt, now in the National Gallery, and Haydn, whose portrait he painted for the Prince of Wales.—ED

Lawrence had enow of gentle sitters. It must not be supposed that he heard Hoppner's injurious words with patience: he vindicated the professional as well as moral purity of his style in firm and temperate language; but he was on the winning side, and could the better take moderation for his motto.

The King, all this time, was of the Lawrence faction; for which various reasons have been assigned. Hoppner was an enthusiastic admirer of Reynolds, and when young had filled the palace with praises of his kindness as a man, and his genius as an artist. His Majesty never liked Sir Joshua. This offence was trebled, when Hoppner, resenting, perhaps, the coldness with which his earliest works were received at St. James's, openly joined the party of the Prince of Wales, and added his wit, which was ever ready, and his influence, which was on the rise, to the ranks of Whiggism. This was, perhaps, less than prudent in a man of genius, who, born for his country, should not give himself up to either of those parties whose fierce hostility has so long torn the island; but it was doubly imprudent in one who had become a husband and a father, and who had to win bread and fame from the patronage of the population at large. When the crop of handsome Whigs was reaped, he could not put his sickle into the ripe harvest of the Tories. Lawrence, meantime, with a prudence which Hoppner called hypocrisy, was silent in the matter of politics, belonged to neither faction, and so kept his easel ready and his colours in order for all.

Those who merely consider Hoppner as a limner of men and women's heads, who dashed them off at a few sittings, pocketed the price, replenished his palette, and prepared himself for any new comer, do his memory injustice. He was a fine free-spirited manly fellow, overflowing with wit and humour, inconsiderate in speech, open-hearted, and as well acquainted with the poetry and history of his native country as the most gifted of her sons. The fame of his conversational powers survives among his companions. He was considered one of the best-informed painters of his time; and in the company of the learned, not less than among the gay and the noble of that day, he was easy and

unembarassed. Among his brethren of the easel he was still more at home, and made himself welcome by his ready wit and various knowledge. It was sometimes his pleasure, in the midst of a serious discussion, to start aside into the whimsical or the humorous; and, in the midst of boisterous mirth, he would as suddenly return to seriousness. Few could be sure when they had his sympathy; except, indeed, in the hour when it was really wanted—for then he failed not. He loved to surprise his friends; and if he raised a laugh, seemed to care little whether it was for him or against him. He and Edridge and two other artists once went into the country; quartered themselves at an inn where the ale was good; and as a fair was held in the neighbourhood, they walked out about sunset, when merriment begins, and mingled in the crowd. There was much din and drollery. Hoppner addressed his companions:—"Listen: you have always seen me in good company, and playing the courtier, and in fine took me for a damned well-bred fellow, and genteel withal. A mistake, I assure you. I love low company, and am a bit of a ready-made blackguard,—see!" He gave his coat a queer pull; his neckcloth a twitch; knocked his hat awry; and putting on a face of indescribable devilry, started into the midst of a mob of reeling rustics, and in a moment was "hail fellow, well met" with the wildest of them. But rough gambols and home-spun wit seemed not enough for his new character; he urged himself into a quarrel with a brawny waggoner, and had a capital set-to with the fists, in which the latter, though a powerful boor and withal a practised boxer, was roughly handled. He gave his antagonist half-a-guinea, set his hat and neckcloth right, and retired amid the applause of the crowd.

Though Hoppner confined himself chiefly to portraiture, he was not only skilful in landscape, but a most ardent lover of the higher branches of the art. He was not one of those who imagined, when he painted a portrait, he had done something historical, and who recognised in his likenesses of the ladies of the hour the great leading principle of moral and intellectual loveliness. He was an admirer, too, of the labours of such of his brethren as

went to poetry and history for their subjects; and the following letter to Cumberland, concerning Stothard's Canterbury Pilgrimage, will show how justly he could feel, and how well he could express himself. It is dated 30th of May, 1807. "This intelligent group is rendered still more interesting by the charm of colouring, which, though simple, is strong, and most harmoniously distributed throughout the picture. The landscape has a deep-toned brightness which accords most admirably with the figures; and the painter has ingeniously contrived to give a value to a common scene, and very ordinary forms, that would hardly be found by unlearned eyes in the natural objects. He has expressed too, with great vivacity and truth, the freshness of morning, at that season when Nature herself is most fresh and blooming,—the spring; and it requires no great stretch of fancy to imagine we perceive the influence of it on the cheeks of the fair Wife of Bath, and her rosy companions, the Monk and Friar. In respect of the execution of this very pleasing design, it is not too much praise to say, that it is wholly free from that vice which painters term *manner*; and it has this peculiarity beside, which I do not remember to have seen in any picture ancient or modern, namely, that it bares no mark of the period in which it was painted, but might very well pass for the work of some able artist of the time of Chaucer. The effect is not, I believe, the result of any association of ideas connected with the costume, but appears in primitive simplicity, and the total absence of all affectation either of colouring or pencil."

Hoppner was one of many artists who imagine they behold in the high prices and ready sale of the works of the great Italian masters a prejudice on the part of the public against all works of living men or of modern times. He was in the habit of saying, when he looked upon a fine work of his own day, "Ay, it is a noble picture; but it has one damning defect,—it is a *modern* one. Prove it, sir, to be but two hundred years old, and from the brush of a famous man, and here's two thousand guineas for it."

The time was, however, at hand when Hoppner was to be no more moved in spirit either by the success of Law-

rence in portraiture, or by the general preference of the public for the historical pieces of long-buried masters. A visible change had for some time appeared in his looks; his conversation had grown rambling and incoherent; few works came from his hand; and though his skill seemed not impaired, he wrought, at best, by fits and starts. A gentlemen has told me that, towards the close of Hoppner's days, he carried a message to him from the Prince of Wales concerning a picture then on his easel. He found the painter violently agitated: he had his palette in his left hand, and was dipping his pencil in the colours, and running to and fro, giving a touch here and a touch there to the picture. He turned suddenly round, and said in a tone of great mildness, "Sir, a thought struck me as you came in; I was unwilling to lose it; the picture has the benefit of it; and that must excuse my seeming rudeness to you." An anecdote related by Northcote is characteristic. "I once went with Hoppner to the hustings to vote for Horne Tooke; and when they asked me what I was, I said, 'a painter.' At this Hoppner was very mad all the way home, and said I should have called myself a portrait painter. I replied, the world had no time to trouble their heads about such distinctions."

During the early part of the year 1810 it was generally known that the health of Hoppner was declining, and it was the feeling of his friends that he had not long to live. His wife was careful and affectionate; his sons were growing up, and their minds expanding; and he loved, as all fathers love, to talk of the hopes he had in them,—hopes amply fulfilled, though he did not live to see them.[1] It was thought that want of success in some latter works weighed on him a little; but when the constitution begins to give way, there is no need to press the body down with imaginary ailments. He felt that internal feebleness and sinking of mind, against which all medicine is weak, and kindness of friends unavailing. Many enquirers came, and kind ones: one among the most anxious, it is pleasing to

[1] The reader needs hardly to be told that the amiable and accomplished consul at Venice, so honourably introduced in Moore's "Life of Byron," was son to our painter.

know, being Lawrence, who went repeatedly. Hoppner, it is said, saw in such visits more of joy at his approaching death, than of true sympathy for the sorrows of a brother. But this, I doubt not, was unjust to Lawrence, who, amidst too much of the silken show of courtesy, was naturally kind-hearted, and of a generous nature. He shall speak for himself: these are his words to a friend:—"You will be sorry to hear that my most powerful competitor—he whom, only to my friends, I have acknowledged as my rival, is, I fear, sinking into the grave;—I mean, of course, Hoppner. He has always been afflicted with bilious and liver complaints, and to these must be greatly attributed the irritation of his mind; and now they have ended in a confirmed dropsy. But though I think he cannot recover, I do not wish that his last illness should appear to be reported by me. You will believe that I sincerely feel the loss of a brother artist, from whose works I have often gained instruction, and who has gone by my side in the race this eighteen years." Hoppner did not live long after the writing of this letter: he died in the beginning of April, 1810, in the fifty-first year of his age.

The worth of his works has been widely acknowledged: he was one of those painters who, with powers and skill for the higher line of art, are compelled, by omnipotent taste, to labour in the lower line, where employment is certain, and recompense sure. Yet labourer in the humbler department of portraiture though he was, he strove to unite with mere likeness the higher qualities of art; and in that simplicity and austere composure of style which he claimed for himself, when he satirised the loose touches of Lawrence, he beheld a closer affinity to the spirit and sentiment of those noble works which he set up as his models.[1] Yet Hoppner was no blind worshipper of the gods of others; his chief deity was Nature—Nature exalted and refined: he sought for elegant simplicity of form and poetic loftiness of sentiment, and often found both.

[1] Several of Hoppner's whole length portraits are to be seen at Hampton Court. They do not give very favourable impression of his powers. This arises partly from the state of dilapidation they are in, his pig-

ments having stood as badly as Joshua's. His practice was, indeed, founded on Sir Joshua's, and Messrs. Redgrave consider that he even copied him in the use of asphaltum and other fugitive materials. Messrs. Redgrave, however, speak in high praise of a portrait of Lady Culling Smith and her daughter, now the property of the Duke of Wellington. There are three portraits by Hoppner in the National Gallery.—Ed.

OWEN.

ART has not yet become with us a fashionable profession for the gentleman and scholar:[1] certain neglect now, and an indifferent memoir hereafter, are no inducements for the polite and the rich to take to the brush or to the chisel; and the consequence is, when time thins the ranks of the Academy, the vacancies are supplied by the chance children of genius, who have come from the plough, the manufactory, or the shop, to assert the truth of the great principle of nature, that talent, like sunshine, sheds its light on all conditions. Such is the story of most of our first-rate artists; that of William Owen can scarcely be called an exception. He was born at Ludlow, in Shropshire, in the year 1769; the month and the day of the month are alike forgotten. His father, educated for the Church, married the daughter of a very respectable family in Gloucestershire; and being disappointed in patronage, commenced bookseller, but with success not at all equal either to his wishes or his merits. Young Owen was educated at the grammar school of Ludlow, where he made such good use of his pen and his books, as enabled him, when his fame rendered it necessary to correspond with men of rank and education, to acquit himself worthily. He was a well-educated, well-informed man,—outspoken, and vigorous-minded; yet he never aspired to be thought a scholar, and was content with the fame, of which no examination could deprive him—that of a fine artist.

Of Owen's early attempts in art, and boyish methods of instructing himself, we have but vague and unsatisfactory accounts. His brother, a man of sense and intelligence, who has served with honour in many parts of the globe, and who now holds the rank of major in the army,[2] has no

[1] This is less true now than it was in Cunningham's time.—ED.

[2] That is at the time when Cunningham wrote.—ED.

remembrance of the studies of William, who was a dozen years older than himself; his father, too, has been long since dead; and his only son, the Rev. William Owen, much as he reverences the memory of his father, can add nothing to what has long been publicly known. The general account is, that he was fond of sketching from very early years; that, during hours of intermission from school, he loved to wander among the fine scenery of his native place, and that his first considerable work was that drawing of Ludlow Castle, which in after-life he thought worthy of presenting to Lady Clive, to whom the place belonged. We are told, too, that his genius gained him the notice of that eminent scholar and antiquarian, Payne Knight; through whose advice, and some add assistance, he was, at the age of seventeen, sent to London, and placed for instruction under the care of Catton of the Royal Academy. This has occasioned a two-fold blunder, viz., that Owen was patronized and handed up to fame by Payne Knight, who discovered him in the humble condition of a coach painter. But though Catton, who taught him, was originally a painter of coaches, he had ceased to be so before Owen was placed under him; and with regard to the patronage of the antiquarian, it amounted only to this —he praised him, carried him to London, got him a teacher, and never more noticed him, nay, never spoke to him, even when he met him in public. Those who were acquainted with that singular character, know that he thought it sufficient condescension to speak to a mere man of genius once in his life: so he treated others, equally eminent in art as Owen.—An exquisite copy of the "Perdita" of Reynolds obtained the painter the friendship of the President, and the advantage of his instruction. Of these early days little more is known; I must, therefore, leave them with their veil of obscurity over them, and pass on to those of his manhood—which were bright enough.

He made his appearance before the public in 1792, when he sent the portrait of "A Gentleman," and "A View of Ludford Bridge, Shropshire," to the Somerset House Exhibition: in the latter his early haunts were remembered. These were probably well received; for in the succeeding

exhibition he had no less than seven portraits: one was "A Lady of Quality," and two were "Clergymen," but to none of them was a name attached. The mystery of his private studies might be supposed to have extended to his public works, had we not known that such was the practice in those days: the modesty of the parties, the humility of the painters, or the etiquette of the Academy, have made early catalogues of little value in writing the history of painting. I have heard that it had been the wish of the academicians themselves to leave their portraits without a name, in the hope that, as works of art alone, they would win their way to distinction. Those of men eminent for rank or genius, and of ladies distinguished for personal loveliness, might accomplish this; but few of the annual sum-total of portraits have any such claim: this was at last perceived; and the name was allowed to be printed, as a new method of calling attention and exciting interest.

At this period Owen had leisure enough to give us a few of those exquisite pictures, half portrait and half fancy, in which Bird, and indeed most of our chief painters, excelled. He sought a young boy or girl to his taste, imagined some pretty employment in the midst of a natural scene, and then introduced the figure as the principal, modifying the features till they approached the ideal, yet still retaining the natural peculiarity of character. These I am disposed to look upon as his best works: and "The Study of a Boy;" "Venus, a Sketch;" and "The Bacchante," of his pictures exhibited in 1796 and 1797, are of this class. At this time he lived at 5, Coventry Street, Haymarket.

Some time in the year 1797, he found out an employment still more pleasant than that of imagining scenes, and putting figures into them, endowed with sentiment, and almost with life. Among the sitters who came to his easel were two ladies, sisters, of the name of Leaf. He painted and exhibited their portraits; and with such skill of hand and fascination of colour had he acquitted himself, that they were universally admired; and the eldest of the two, particularly, occasioned many inquiries. If some were pleased with the portrait, the painter was still more so

with the original; and towards the close of the year he made her his wife. The only issue of this marriage was a son, who was educated at Winchester and Oxford, and entered the Church. Troubles, of which poverty was the leader, followed too close upon his marriage. In a moment, when he forgot in a warm burst of friendship whether he were rich or poor, he made himself responsible for another to a crushing amount: his friend failed, and Owen found himself burdened with a debt, which pressed long and sorely on him, but which at length he fully and conscientiously discharged. Want came upon him like an armed man, and compelled him to toil without remission at his easel. In the year 1798 alone, he exhibited no less than ten portraits: one of these was "The Lord Chancellor;" another was, "A Family Picture of Lady Hardwicke and Lord Royston;" a third was "Lady Strange;" but the finest of all was a "Cottage Child from Nature." There he was easy and unconstrained, and moved without consulting the tastes and whims of fastidious sitters, who presume to dictate posture and sentiment, with all the judgment of Queen Elizabeth, who demanded her portrait painted without shadow.

To gain distinction in portraiture is at no time an easy task, since vanity takes offence at truth, and a sort of flattery has to be practised to reconcile the proud to their own looks; but to come into the market against Lawrence, and Beechey, and Hoppner, who, patronized by kings and princes, had all the rank and beauty of England contending for place at their easels, required no common skill and talent. There is, however, no question that Owen was a worthy rival: his drawing was the least of his merit; he seized individual character with great force, and though his colouring wanted lucid depth and harmony, he never failed to stamp off an image mental and bodily of his subject: perhaps he was too little of a flatterer. A painter cannot select the most intellectual sitter; the mean, the parsimonious, and the sensual, pay as willingly sometimes as the loftiest of soul; and the artist who should drive away such subjects from his studio might starve amidst the applause of his virtue. He has, too, his

own professional feelings. Your skilful and eloquent advocate saves some scoundrel from the hulks, or the rope, from no love of the client, but to show how genius can triumph over justice and sense: a painter, in like manner, extends the saving immortality of his colours to some odd and out-of-the-world sort of sitter; and as he touches in the fleshy softness of his cheeks and chin, or his glimmering seven-per-cent.-calculating eyes, he thinks only of the wonderful skill of hand which his brethren will impute to him, and what the world will say of his ability.

It is the misfortune of the artist when he has to borrow fame from the importance of his subject; and I am afraid I must impute a little of the praise which Owen received for his portrait of William Pitt to that cause. Be that as it may, there was but one opinion of its excellence: all the statesman's friends—and they were the first of the nation—were its admirers; the fortunate artist was invited to Walmer Castle; and much was the man respected whom the premier delighted to honour. From this moment his fame was considered safe, and employment poured in.

A painting-room more extensive now became necessary; he found one in Leicester Square, a place of old renown in art; and thither he repaired, in the year 1798, with all his gods—save those of the domestic hearth: these he found a refuge for in Arabella Row, Pimlico; where he had the advantage of a view into the royal gardens, till the King reared a lofty mound, and excluded all eyes from a privacy which, to the loss of art, his Majesty did not live to enjoy. In his new studio Owen carried on the manufacture of portraits to a vast extent during a period of twenty-seven years. Men of all ranks, and ladies of all conditions, flocked to his easel. He rose early—wrought late; drew, painted, touched, finished, framed, packed; and when these were out of the house, fresh heads appeared. The monotony was sometimes too much for him. He has been known to turn a portrait from the easel, postpone the coming of a dozen sitters, single out some little happy theme, and in the course of a week dash it on the canvas in all the truth and charm of nature embellished by art:

this put him in good humour with himself and with his destiny; and lucky was he who sat for his portrait the next. Of heads, it is almost incredible how many he made; he is known to have *exhibited* nearly two hundred in the course of his career,—not dashed off roughly and at random, but executed in a fine bold free spirit, worthy of the school of which he was now a distinguished member.

We must name a few of the heads on which he bestowed the honours of the pencil. 1. Sir Robert Laurie, bart.; 2. John Soane, architect; 3. Lady Leicester; 4. Lady Beaumont;[1] 5. Mr. Stuart Wortley, afterwards Lord Wharncliffe; 6. Countess Cowper; 7. Lord F. Spencer; Shute Barrington, Bishop of Durham; 9. Marquis of Stafford; 10. Cyril Jackson, dean of Christchurch; 11. Duchess of Leinster; 12. Archbishop of York; 13. Bishop of London; 14. Baron Thomson; 15. Lord Grenville; 16. John Wilson Croker; 17. Wellesley Pole; 18. Sir David Dundas; 19. Sir William Scott; 20. Chief Justice Vicary Gibbs; 21. Duke of Cumberland; 22. Earl of Ashburnham; 23. Sir John Nichol; 24. Dr. Stuart, primate of Ireland; 25. Nicholas Vansittart, Chancellor of the Exchequer; 26. Duke of Montrose; 27. Earl of Cassillis; 28. Marquis of Grahame; 29. Earl of Fitzwilliam; 30. Countess of Cassillis; 31. Earl of Bridgewater; 32. Earl Verulam; 33. Major-General Hamilton; 34. Bishop of Peterborough; 35. Chief Justice Abbott; 36. Bishop of St. David's; 37. Duchess of Buccleuch; 38. Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, bart.; 39. Viscount Exmouth; 40. Duke of Athol. These are all names known in the world; and some of the portraits attracted much notice in the Exhibition, but none more than that of the Duchess of Buccleuch; the placid dignity of expression and fine tone of colour brought many of the students to study and imitate. Cyril Jackson, a man of great vigour of understanding, and ready and agreeable wit; Lord Grenville, austere and thoughtful; Vicary Gibbs, shrewd, penetrating, and sar-

[1] Wilkie has a note in his Journal—"March 6, 1809. Called on Owen, and saw his picture of the Dowager Lady Beaumont, which I think by much the finest thing Owen has yet done. I saw several portraits of his besides, which I much liked."—ED.

castic; the late Bishop of Durham, generous and open-hearted; the Marquis of Stafford, stately yet gentle, aristocratic yet affable;—all were stamped off with much freedom and vigour, and such command of light and shade as kept up the name of Owen with the highest. Many portraits, however, which we have not named were of equal, and some of them even of superior beauty to the best of his magnates. Some of his female heads, particularly, from the less elevated ranks of life, were of exquisite outline and character; his hand, where he was at home, and felt nothing very grand to overawe him, excelled in that careless yet elegant ease of touch which study seldom can attain.

In the full flow of his practice, and yet at a time when he little expected the honour, Owen was made a member of the Academy. He had gone there when he was young "to learn his trade"—I use the words of Barry—and naturally looked for admission to its bosom when he had proved himself worthy. This, however, did not come till the 10th of February, 1806, when he was thirty-seven years old, and long after he had exhibited some of his best works. It is true that men cannot be admitted to this dignity till death makes room in the ranks; but it is also true, that by some chance or other, men obtain admission who, if true genius be the price, have no right to be there. The number, in the present overflow of artists, is too limited: if 40 were necessary in Sir Joshua's day, at least 60 are necessary now; and certainly 20 might be found among the associates and students, some of whom have produced works worthy of the very first names of the Academy.

This new honour lent some further attraction to the name of Owen: it is even said that the Prince of Wales expressed his approbation of his talents, and spoke of sitting for his portrait. If so, however, the sitting did not take place. At this time, Lawrence with George the Third, Hoppner with the Prince of Wales, and Beechey with others of the court, were all but omnipotent; a circumstance which Owen had good reason to lament, as all the gay, the fashionable, and most of the lovely, went

to those whom the King, the Prince, and the court supported.

Of this princely partiality he sometimes complained in private, and said, "These fellows skim the cream, and leave me the milk;" and when a northern friend, in condoling with him, said, with the poet—

> "It's hardly in a body's power
> To keep at times from being sour,
> To see how things are shared."

"Just so," he answered: "had this Burns of yours, sir, lived now, I would have painted his portrait for writing these very words. Really I am sour, very sour, at times. There Lawrence, with his low sweet voice, speaks of virtue and moral loveliness to the King and Queen, and they order more portraits;—there Hoppner, whenever he seems at a loss for something to do, the Prince, or some of his wealthy companions, sit to him, and help him afterwards to sell the portrait; and then Beechey, sir,—he sits with the feathers of princesses fanning his brow;—and so they go on, and I get their leavings." Of Lawrence he had no great admiration; he thought him much too courtly to be candid, and did not hesitate to say what he felt. It happened that he went to an evening party some time after he had become eminent, and several friends made a slight press forward to welcome him. A lady happened to be lioness for the night—one who did a little with the pencil herself, and knew all the children of the easel. She did not like that a lion should intrude; and, leaning from the chair, where she sat as in a sort of throne, asked aloud, "Who is that?"—"It is Owen, madam."—"Owen, sir! and who is Owen?"—"Oh! the new artist, madam, the famous painter."—"Owen, and painter," she responded, in a voice softened and low,—"I never heard of him before!"—"A female Lawrence, by Jupiter!" muttered Owen, and marched to the other end of the room.

His chief resource in times of vexation was in works of what I would call domestic history. On these he wrought with an avidity and cheerfulness unknown to him in portrait painting. He borrowed the action, and the senti-

ment, and story from fancy, and filled up the outline from nature; but then he did not slavishly transfer nature, rough and raw as he found it, to his canvass; he looked at it as a bee surveys the flower—not to carry off the bloom, but collect the honey. Of these, "The Beggar's Daughter of Bethnal Green" was one of his earliest and happiest; it appeared in the Academy in 1801, and the catalogue referred the visitor to the old ballad of that name in "Percy's Reliques." On comparing the painting with the poetry, it was evident that the artist had caught the character truly, and, amid all the humility of the maiden's condition, had shown some of that inborn nobleness of nature expressed by the rude minstrel. "The Sleeping Girl" was another of those happy, and perhaps hasty, things. "The Schoolmistress" recalled the poetic picture of Shenstone to mind. "The Beggars" were touched by a hand which could exhibit wretchedness without exciting disgust,—which knew how to tighten rather than loosen the bond of sympathy which unites us to our species. "The Girl at the Spring" was well worth two of his finest portraits. But the chief favourite, perhaps, of his fancy works, was "Peasants Resting by the Roadside." It was painted for Lister Parker. "Adherence to the simple elegance of nature," says one of the critics on the Exhibition which contained this fine picture, "unstudied ease, and gracefulness of attitude, with beauty of face and form, charm the heart of the spectator. The maternal tenderness with which the mother presents the nectarean repast to her child—the sound repose of the infant girl—the tranquil and amiable expression of the eldest boy, excite gentle and agreeable sympathy. The drapery has a graceful carelessness, suitable to the humble character which it covers. There is scarcely a painter in the Academy who can vie with this excellent artist in the force with which he relieves his objects, while he preserves the mellowness and harmony of his colouring and effect. Sir Joshua appears to revive in this pupil of nature. He, indeed, has more firmness and precision of outline and drawing than that famous painter, and equally captivates by his faithful delineations of the lovely objects of humble life." The

language of this critic is a little out of keeping; but his sentiments, though too richly draped, are just and true. Reynolds was an indifferent draughtsman; that is, he could not delineate the human form in the true elegance of its proportions, by a mere outline: but he made up for this deficiency by the marvellous mastery which he acquired over the human form, taking it in the mass; he had a fine judgment in quantity, and his full draperies concealed defective detail. In this, certainly, Owen excelled the President:[1] but then his colouring was less lucid and harmonious; neither had he that magical power in light and shade, nor that skill of giving to unusual postures the ease and grace of nature, which are so visible in Sir Joshua.

Those friends—and they were numerous—who sat to Owen for their likenesses, may think that the biographer is doing the artist less than justice when he passes over many portraits as things of small account, and dwells on what they, perhaps, considered the mere sportings of his pencil,—the little studies of children, groups of peasants, and single figures, in which fancy and reality claim equal shares. In truth, his fame lay, in his lifetime, with the former; but in death, it must be maintained by the latter. Men's living looks, with the memory of them, die away and are forgotten; but sentiment and natural action belong to all times,—and in these, artists who desire the praise of posterity must put trust.—A Cupid, painted for Sir Thomas Heathcote, was called an exquisitely finished thing; and it was so: but the god of love has lost a little of his power in painting as well as poetry: and he who complains of the darts and flames of Cupid has, by the universal consent of all Misses above seventeen, been voted affected and pedantic. In a better taste was "The

[1] Sir Joshua's drawing was not, perhaps, his strong point, but to say that Owen excelled him even in this particular is absurd. Owen's drawing is often very defective, and his colouring harsh and crude, with little understanding of the effects of chiaroscuro. Redgrave classes him, it is true, as one of the best followers of Sir Joshua; but his portraits have far less character than those of Raeburn, nor do they even equal Hoppner's in truth and force of colour.—Ed.

Fortune-teller and Lady:" it was easy to see the insidious poison of the tawny sibyl's tongue stealing through the frame of her victim;—so lovely and so innocent were her looks, that they attracted a crowd in the Exhibition from morning till night. The "Cottage Door" was another of his little happy hits;—so were "The Children in the Wood," a piece of which it is praise sufficient to say that it breathes all over of the simple pathos of the old melting ballad.[1] Towards the close of his career such things grew less frequent: portraiture, with its temptations of pleasing society, prompt payment, and ready-made looks, which cost imagination nothing, prevailed. "The Boy and Kitten," his admission present to the Royal Academy, though mentioned last, was an early performance, and may rank with some of his best. As his powers first manifested themselves in landscape, it might have been natural to expect some fine works of that kind from his hand; but, if we except the snatches of scenery which he dashed in as backgrounds to his portraits, and one picture of "Hawarden Castle, Flintshire," we can find little in which he followed the first right impulse of nature. A critic, who says of the Hawarden Castle, "in united depth and splendour it would almost stand a comparison with Rembrandt's celebrated 'Windmill,'"—adds these words, "from this branch of the arts Mr. Owen always expressed himself as having derived the purest gratification." Owen must, then, have put a sad constraint on his nature when he turned from what afforded the purest gratification to become limner to the population at large, at so much per head. Perhaps the demons of indolence and avarice conspired against him. Your poetic landscape costs much time and outlay of thought, and the reward is doubtful; whereas a head comes living to the easel, bringing shape, character, colour, and expression with it, sits quietly and smilingly till its likeness is transferred to canvass, and the money is gained. These are temptations which few are found to resist.

When, in 1810, he was made portrait painter to the

[1] Several of these subjects were engraved, and were once very popular. —Ed.

Prince of Wales, and more particularly when he became "Principal Portrait Painter to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent," men looked—and Owen amongst them—for golden commissions, and free intercourse with the palace. These honours, however, were barren; there are no royal pictures in the list of those which he exhibited: he held the rank, but other hands touched the revenues. When the Prince offered to knight him in 1813, the painter modestly declined a distinction which promised to be expensive, and nothing more. It has been said, indeed, that had the painter lived till the Prince became King, commissions would have been poured upon him; but it has been generally observed that royal patronage, instead of being diffused like sunshine over all that are worthy, has something of personal attachment about it. West enjoyed the monopoly of the historical department, and Hoppner was the only brother whom Lawrence suffered near the throne of portraiture.

Royal favour might have administered repose to Owen's mind, since it seems that he set a great value upon it; but, after all, he could not well have been more honoured than he was in his day. Sir George Beaumont—a man of taste and talent, a painter himself, and a friend alike of artists and poets,—was warm and active in his attachment; not less so was Sir John Leycester (afterwards Lord de Tabley); the Earl Fitzwilliam loved the man and befriended the artist; Dr. Howley, Bishop of London, a divine, generous and discerning, appointed his only son, William, one of the preachers in the Royal Chapel, Whitehall. He lived, too, on good terms with his brethren;—Callcott, the eminent landscape painter, was his most intimate friend: they visited Paris together, when, in 1814, the bayonets of the Allies opened the doors of the Louvre; but we have no memorandum of the journey, or of our painter's opinions upon the merits of the great works which he then saw for the first and last time. He was a man who felt keenly, and dealt in rough, strong, natural expressions, and has, like many others, left the tradition of wit without samples.

So much had commissions multiplied, that in 1817 he found his income for one year amounted to £3000. He

kept no regular account of anything; but merely noted down his winnings in a little pocket-book, ran his eye now and then over the pages, and if he perceived that he was gaining remained satisfied. It is not known how much he amassed; —had his good health continued, he was in a fair way to a fortune. In 1818 he left his little convenient house in Arabella Row, and removed to 33, Bruton Street. On this occasion something like a presentiment of coming evil darkened on his mind; he regretted leaving a house dear to him, from the memory of the difficulties he had surmounted under its roof, and where he had gathered wealth and obtained fame. His forebodings were fulfilled: he was not well established in his new residence till he was attacked with a complaint which prostrated his strength at once, and struck the pencil out of his hand. It is true that he partially recovered, nay, that he painted, after this, though with pain, an excellent portrait of Sir Thomas Dyke Acland; that the waters of Cheltenham strengthened him a little; and that he had intervals of ease, when he hoped his days were yet to be long in the land, and that he should resume his studies with new fervour. But that hour came never; he returned to London, and sank down on a couch helpless and dejected;[1] there he lay for five long

[1] Not constantly "dejected" we may hope from an account Wilkie gives of him in a letter to Sir George Beaumont, written Oct. 30, 1820. After thanking his lordship for a present of game that he had received from him, Wilkie writes:—"This circumstance brings to my mind a call which I made, about eight days ago, upon our good friend poor Mr. Owen at a little cottage he now occupies in Bayswater. He had received from you the same gratifying mark of remembrance, and inquired very kindly after you and Lady Beaumont. He stated himself to be a little stouter than he had been, and appeared, considering all things, very cheerful, and much interested in hearing of all his friends, and what they were doing. He is still, however, kept in a recumbent position; and, although free from pain, the symptoms are, from what I can learn, as unfavourable as ever. He had been making little sketches in colours upon paper, and talked of a fancy subject he was inclined to begin upon his recovery. He alluded to the situation his illness had placed him in with respect to the purchase of his house, and the interruption of his prospects; but, distressing as his case is, he bears himself cheerfully and like a man. Sir Thomas Lawrence, much to his credit, called for him some time ago, and took him to Buckingham House to show him his portraits of the foreign sovereigns he is now completing there; with

years, experiencing no alleviation and no change, unless being wheeled from one room to another on his sofa can be called a change. Baillie, Carlisle, Lynn, and Warren visited him in vain: he was wasting gradually away; but his death was hastened by one of those melancholy mistakes of which we sometimes read: a chemist, from whom Owen obtained his prescriptions, labelled the medicines so that the unfortunate patient swallowed opium instead of an aperient draught; he fell into a stupor, lingered a few hours, and expired 11th of February, 1825, in the fifty-sixth year of his age.

Those who were admitted to Owen's fireside relate that he was kind, hospitable, and good-humoured; spoke his mind without much consideration or choice of fine words; and on several occasions had shown much manliness, and not a little courage. At school, when he was stabbed severely in the thigh by one of his companions, he had the fortitude to be silent, and the good feeling to conceal his mishap in order to screen the other from punishment; and once when his brother, Major Owen, had fallen into a river, he plunged in and saved his life at the risk of his own. In his genius he was rebuked somewhat by those painters who had started before him in the race. The man who lives by recording living faces must always calculate the chances of such a disadvantage: more active or more courtly rivals may run away with princes, ministers of state, and lords and ladies of high degree; and if so, he must either find heroes and heroines among the more ordinary part of the population, or throw his palette into the Thames. He who monopolizes the king and those whom the king delighteth to honour, robs Laban of his gods, and he must have them back or perish.[1]

these he said he was much gratified, and thought them a step beyond anything Sir Thomas had previously done" ("Life of Wilkie," vol. ii). —Ed.

[1] This memoir is the longest and best account that exists of William Owen.—Ed.

HARLOW.

GEORGE HENRY HARLOW was born in St. James's Street, London, 10th of June, 1787. The story of his birth was truly and touchingly told by one who witnessed his funeral. "I shall never forget what I saw some thirty years ago, when I called and inquired for a worthy friend, long my companion in Canton. I was introduced to a lady with five very young girls round her knees, and a boy-babe in her arms; she received me in silence, and not without tears; the mournings which she wore were for my friend, her husband, who had been dead six months; the infant in her arms, a month old or scarcely more, was the eminent painter whom we have this day borne to the grave."

His father was a merchant who had lived many years in the East; his widow, young, wealthy, and handsome, gave all her thoughts to her husband's memory and the education of her children; and her only son, as might be expected, had a large share of her solicitude. He attended the classical seminary of Dr. Barrow, in Soho Square; then that of Roy, in Burlington Street; and was also some time at Westminster school. Of his proficiency as a scholar there are contradictory accounts. He was not unwilling in after life to talk of his attainments in classic lore; but he might do so with some safety, for he only alluded to it amongst artists. The learning of the youth could not be otherwise than moderate who left school at sixteen, and whose mind even before that early date had been much occupied with other studies.

The love of painting came on Harlow early; and living as he did in the midst of exhibitions and galleries, his mind was already disciplined to a greater extent than he was aware of when he took the pencil in his hand. The

painter bred in the solitude of the country has to train up his mind among the rough, wild beauties of unregulated nature; the painter bred in the city studies the well-considered scenes of the most consummate masters, and has the culled poetry of nature served up to him in every gallery. The first acquires skill slowly; the other avails himself of the fruits of fancy not his own, and soon becomes dexterous in the tricks of colour, and cunning in the arts of posture and grouping. The attempts of Harlow were so promising that his mother, having confirmed her own opinion by the examination of friends, resolved that he should devote himself to art; and, with more eagerness than taste, put him under the care of Henry de Cort, a landscape painter from Antwerp, of humble abilities and supreme conceit, who undertook to teach him the secrets of the profession. In such a school nothing but enthusiasm such as Harlow's could have prospered: he acquired knowledge sufficient to see that he was wasting his time; and, undertaking now to judge for himself, sought instruction in the studio of Drummond the portrait painter. "Here," says one of his biographers, "he pursued his art with an ardour from which even amusements could not seduce him."

He had studied something more than a year with his new master when he grew desirous of profiting by another instructor. One account represents him making a tour of the painters' studios with his mother, for the purpose of determining on the most worthy; while another says that this was decided for him by the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, through whose interposition he was placed under the care of Lawrence. That he might have made that choice for himself, is, however, very likely; young as he was, he could not fail to see much in the works of the future president akin to his own feelings; besides, it was natural that he should desire to study with the most distinguished,—and Lawrence had already asserted his superiority. His admission to the painting rooms of his new master was coupled with conditions which sound strangely in ears unacquainted with the practice of artists. He paid one hundred guineas yearly as a pupil; and for

this Harlow "was to have free access to Sir Thomas's house at nine o'clock in the morning, with leave to copy his pictures till four o'clock in the afternoon, but to receive no instruction of any kind." If such were the terms on which he commenced, they were, if we can credit the accounts of some of the biographers, very soon altered. "Sir Thomas," says Smith, "being highly pleased with his productions, employed him to prepare some of his pictures in the dead-colouring, and to advance copies, &c.; but these repeated kindnesses, I am sorry to acknowledge, were ill-requited." What requital, permission to copy another man's pictures, at the price of one hundred guineas a year, without one word of instruction, demanded, I am unable to determine; Smith himself complains that he was never paid for some such privileges in the studio of Nollekens. Meantime, that the son of the merchant of Canton was engaged in the unprofitable trade of art, reached the ears of some of his father's city friends; and they offered him the bribe of a writership in India, to forsake painting. His answer was, "I care not for riches, —give me fame and glory." The worthy men of Leadenhall Street thought the youth mad, and said so.

In the studio of Lawrence he continued only eighteen months; yet it is generally allowed that he entered more largely into the peculiar style and character of his master's performances than any other of his pupils. His success must be attributed wholly to himself; for Lawrence, though he employed him in forwarding portraits, never condescended to instruct him farther than how to accomplish the drudgery on hand: in this he resembled Reynolds, who, in his studio and at his table, allowed his pupils and his guests to help themselves, or want. Harlow was too proud to relish long the mechanical labours to which he was thus subjected, and became impatient of the restraints which regular studies imposed: nor did he like the cold measured graciousness of Lawrence: in short, as he acquired mastery over his art, his vanity whispered that he had been long enough under the control of one who, he imagined, did not very far excel himself in the genius of the profession. He was ready for rebellion; nor was an opportunity long

in being found. In the portrait of Mrs. Angerstein, Lawrence had introduced a Newfoundland dog, painted with such skill as brought praises in showers; and Harlow, who had at least drawn the animal in dead-colour, fancied that some of the drops of approbation might have fallen on him. Had his share been greater than this, as it perhaps was, still he could never have been justified in claiming it as his own work, or in intruding on the Angersteins, and repeating his accusation. "All that Sir Thomas Lawrence did in a case," says one of his biographers, "which would have justified strong resentment, was to say to him, 'As the animal you claim is among the best things I ever painted, of course you have no need of farther instructions from me. You must leave my house immediately.'" Harlow did this without hesitation, and he repaired to the Queen's Head at Epsom, where his style of living having incurred a bill which he could not discharge, he proposed, like Morland under similar circumstances, to paint a sign-board in liquidation of his score. This was accepted—he painted both sides: the one presented a front view of her Majesty, in a sort of clever dashing caricatura of Sir Thomas's style; the other represented the back view of the Queen's person, as if looking into the sign-board; and underneath was painted, "T. L., Greek Street, Soho." When Sir Thomas met him, he addressed him with, "I have seen your additional act of perfidy at Epsom; and if you were not a scoundrel I would kick you from one end of the street to the other."—"There is some privilege in being a scoundrel, for the street is very long," replied Harlow, unabashed, but moving out of reach of the threatened vengeance. Such is the current story; but there must be some error either in the facts or their date. Harlow was but a youth eighteen years old when he left Lawrence, and too young therefore for a man's resentment; neither had his conduct, a mere tricky slip, been such as to call forth fierce language in a person habitually so cautious and guarded as Lawrence. On the other hand, had Harlow arrived at manhood when it happened, he would not have allowed the words "scoundrel" and "perfidy" to pass with impunity. However all this may have

been, the pupil quarrelled with Lawrence, and resolving to be master of his own movements in future, commenced working for himself.

His love of independence in study was carried to an injurious extent. Having set down all lessons given to genius by others as impertinent, and all study in academies and schools as so much time bestowed in an attempt to destroy originality, he resolved never to avail himself of the facilities which the Royal Academy affords, and never drew there, nor enrolled himself as a student. He disliked all rules—all fixed periods of study—all limitations of subject or of space; and declared he could do more at his mother's fireside, where his attention was undivided—where he had no one to lecture him upon the propriety of adopting the styles of other men, and where invention was not laid down to scale, nor measured by feet and inches. Many other peculiarities have been ascribed to him—among the rest that of dressing in a style at once too expensive for his purse, and too magnificent for his station. Smith says, "He was often the laughing-stock of his brother artists, particularly when he wished to pass for a man of high rank, whose costume he mimicked; and that folly he would often venture upon, without an income sufficient to pay one of his many tailors' bills." We must, however, be permitted to accept this story with some distrust. To try to pass for a man of high rank by means of costume, at a period when all who aspired to the rank of gentlemen were dressed alike, would, I think, have been a flight in folly too high for Harlow. There is, I fear, more truth in the statement which charges him with inflaming himself with wine in company, till he forgot the delicacy which an age, pure at least in speech, requires. During these hours, which were not, however, frequent, he certainly gave a loose to licentious conversation; and men who, out of esteem for his talents, had asked him to their tables, were observed to be cautious how they repeated the invitation.

The youthful aspirant who despised all regular studies, and who quarrelled with Lawrence, was not likely to be a successful candidate for the honours of the Royal Academy. Accordingly, on his offering himself for the rank of Asso-

ciate, there was but one vote in his favour; and when Fuseli was accused of having bestowed the solitary suffrage, he vindicated himself by saying, "I voted for the talent—not for the man!" In this the Professor of Painting was right: the Academy ought to hold no inquest on the minor morals —on the propriety of dress, or the courtesies of life; their business is with *art*, and nothing but art. It is true that gross immorality of conduct may render a very clever man unworthy of admission; but no such charge could be brought against Harlow. Mere little eccentricities of character, so frequently allied to the finest genius, are apt enough, however, to be set down as proofs of folly, if not madness, by the cold-hearted and calculating; and he who pursues his object without regard to the opinions and caprices of others, has at all times been likely to be reckoned headstrong, meddling, and presumptuous. This repulse—and a rude one it was—exasperated Harlow against the Academy; and cursing them in his heart, some say with his tongue, he resolved to prove to the world that they had wronged a man of genius.

Harlow had set his heart on some grand revenge; but an angry man cannot always find the opportunity which he seeks; and when he finds it, he may discover that the task is above his strength. It has indeed been said that there is no escape from

> "The settled hate and vengeance strong
> Of him who treasures up a wrong;"—

and this may be true as to an individual; but who shall contend single-handed with forty? The first works of Harlow were not such as to excite any serious alarm in the minds of the Royal Academy. They were of an historical nature: "Bolingbroke's Entry into London," and the "Quarrel between Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Essex." The failure of his hopes of fame from these induced him to paint portraits; and as he had considerable facility of hand, skill in drawing, and generally caught the proper peculiarity of character, he soon found many sitters. His first exhibited production was a drawing of his mother. She had lived to see her son become eminent, and died

when he was twenty-two years old: he loved her memory, and ever mentioned her name with tenderness. But the work which first caught the public attention was the "Hubert and Prince Arthur," painted for Mr. Leader at the price of one hundred guineas. The force of character, and splendour of colours, had more influence with the public than with the proprietor, who liked this historical effort so little that he had it exchanged for portraits of his daughters.[1] We have no wish to be sarcastic upon the amiable vanity of one who prefers his own children to the heroes of history. Taste which arises from domestic affection deserves to be cherished; and if we may estimate private happiness from the multitude of portraits of the nameless and unknown, our own nation enjoys more fireside tranquillity than any other in the universe. It is probable that Harlow would have refused or resented this singular exchange; but poverty, as it parts good company, often crushes lofty resolutions—and so it fared with him. Young, giddy, and thoughtless, he seldom looked farther before him than the present moment; and when he received a sum of money, scattered it readily with both hands, trusting to a fame which he felt to be rising, and a skill of hand which he knew to be growing, to supply the wants of to-morrow. He was, moreover, quite unskilled in the ways of the world: too enthusiastic, and too generous, to measure mankind by a meaner standard than what he gauged himself with, it was not till he had received some severe admonitions, not by precept but example, that he consented to lower the tone of his philosophy. Among his portraits those of the cynical Northcote[2] and the selfish

[1] This assertion I find contradicted in a letter from Mr. Alaric Watts to Allan Cunningham, preserved in the Cunningham MSS.:—"You are entirely in error (he says) in your assertion that Mr. Leader liked Harlow's first historical effort so little that he exchanged it for portraits of his daughters. On the contrary, he liked it so much that, not content with paying him a higher price than he demanded for his performance, he gave him no less than three commissions for pictures of a similar size—two family full-length groups and a portrait of Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth."—ED.

[2] Harlow painted two portraits of Northcote; the second, exhibited in 1817, was commissioned by Sir John Swinburne. An amusing sarcasm

Nollekens have been much commended. Of the former there is a fine engraving by Lewis: the latter is in the drawing-room of the Duke of St. Albans.

The success of his portraits, and the praise, without patronage, which his historical attempts obtained, probably induced him to try a blending of the two styles in one piece; and, accordingly, he commenced what some call "The Trial of Queen Catherine," and others, "The Kemble Family." The world had seen works enough of this class: the pictures of Reynolds, Romney, and Barry are not likely to be forgotten. I cannot, however, regard such productions as strictly historical: ancient days shake hands with latter; nor can we survey, without a smile, the heads of those with whom we live, and dance, and dine, placed upon the bodies of princes and courtiers who have passed to their final account two hundred years ago. Thus the Queen Catherine of Harlow's picture, asserting her dignity, and claiming protection of the law before King Henry and his courtiers, is, in spite of costume and quotation from Shakspeare, Mrs. Siddons still. And so much, perhaps, the better in one point of view—for it is more than probable that the injured queen had not the good fortune to possess a countenance so majestically intellectual as that of our great actress. It is, however, the province of the historic painter to employ either the actual heads of the period of his work, or invent heads in keeping with their characters. Harlow meant, probably, nothing more than a copy of the scene as presented on the stage, and took the heads as he found them. Be that as it may, he has made a fine picture. It is to the honour of Welch, the professor of music, that he commissioned it to be painted; and it is to the honour of the artist that, having enlarged the work

of Fuseli's is told respecting it. Harlow, being at a loss for an appropriate object in the background, applied to Fuseli for advice. "Put an hour-glass," sneered Fuseli. The young painter, not perceiving the sarcastic nature of the advice, was delighted with the suggestion, and mentioned it to Northcote, who, of course, was greatly enraged, and said to a friend, "He had better put in the skull and crossbones too, as these would certainly be in keeping with my personal appearance." Harlow then remembered that Fuseli had said, on seeing the portrait, "My goot friend, you have given us a bag of bones."—Ed.

and bestowed much time and skill upon it, he made no additional charge. Such it seems were the powers of his memory, that he required but one sitting of the accomplished actress: he has caught the full vigour of her character in the mass: the detail of the lineaments always detracts from the heroic.

Concerning this picture we find the following notice by Knowles, in his life of Fuseli. "In the year 1817 Fuseli sat, at my request, to Harlow for his portrait, which is on panel, of a cabinet size. This eminent painter was highly gratified by the compliment, and exerted every faculty to do his best. Fuseli obliged him and me, by giving for this picture twelve sittings of two hours each; and a more perfect resemblance, or characteristic portrait, has seldom been painted. I attended Fuseli at each sitting; and during the progress of this portrait, Harlow commenced and finished his last and most esteemed work, 'The Trial of Queen Catherine,' in which he introduced many portraits, but more particularly those of the Kemble family.[1] In the performance of this work he owed many obligations to Fuseli for his critical remarks; for when he first saw the picture, chiefly in dead colouring, he said, 'I do not disapprove of the general arrangement of your work, and I see you will give it a powerful effect of light and shadow: but you have here a composition of more than twenty figures, or, I should rather say, parts of figures, because you have not shown one leg or foot, which makes it very defective. Now, if you do not know how to draw legs and feet I will show you;' and taking up a crayon he drew two on the wainscot of the room. Harlow profited by these remarks; and the next time we saw the picture the whole arrangement in the foreground was changed. Fuseli then said, 'So far you have done well: but now you have not introduced a back figure to throw the eye of the spectator into the picture;' and then pointed out by what

[1] This theatrical picture is so well known by means of engraving that no further remark upon it is needed. Its popularity has been strangely enduring, for we still find that this is always the picture reproduced as a sample of Harlow's art. The original is now in the possession of Mr. Morrison of Basildon Park.—Ed.

means he might improve it in this particular. Accordingly, Harlow introduced the two boys who are taking up the cushion: that which shows the back is altogether due to Fuseli, and is certainly the best-drawn figure in the picture. Fuseli afterwards attempted to get him to improve the drawing of the arms of the principal object, Mrs. Siddons, who is represented as Queen Catherine, but without much effect, particularly the left; and after having witnessed many ineffectual attempts of the painter to accomplish this, he desisted; and remarked, 'It is a pity that you never attended the Antique Academy.'"

The arrogant officiousness of Fuseli, and the forbearance of Harlow, in this scene, are alike remarkable: few artists are to be found so mild and meek as to receive with thankfulness remarks sternly and sneeringly made; and if the youthful painter had not been overawed by the dictatorial tone and widely acknowledged authority of the Professor, he would certainly have shown him at once out of his studio. But this was not all: as a specimen of the vanity of Harlow, and the pedagogue petulance of Fuseli, Knowles tells the following story:—"Harlow proved himself, on many occasions, to be among the vainest of men; and generally wished it to be believed that he possessed information to which he was a stranger. On one occasion he said to me, "It is extraordinary that Fuseli, who is so fine a scholar, should suffer engravers to place translations under plates taken from the classical subjects painted by him;' and remarked, 'I was educated a scholar, having been at Westminster school, and therefore wish to see the subjects given in the original languages;' and then imprudently instanced the print taken from his picture of the Death of Œdipus. When Fuseli appointed the next sitting, on our way to Harlow's house I mentioned this conversation to him; and added, 'I really think he does not understand one word of Greek or Latin;' to which he gave his assent, and remarked, 'He has made, I think, an unfortunate choice; for, if I recollect rightly, the Greek passage, as well as my translation of it, is scratched in under the mezzo-tinto. But, before we part, I will bring his knowledge to the test.' After he had sat the usual

time, he asked for a piece of chalk, and wrote in large letters, on the wainscot, the following passage:—

"'Κτύπησε μὲν ζεὺς χθόνιος, αἰδὲ παρθένοι
ῥίγησαν ὡς ἤκουσαν· ἐς δε γουνάτα
πατρὸς πεσοῦσαι, κλαῖον.'[1]

After having done so, he said to Harlow, 'Read that;' and finding, by his hesitation, that he did not know a letter, he resumed, 'On our way hither, Knowles told me you had said that I ought not to permit engravers to put translations under the prints taken from me, and that you had instanced the Œdipus. Now, that is the Greek quotation whence the subject is taken, and I find you cannot read a letter of it. Let me give you this advice:—you are, undoubtedly, a good portrait-painter; and, I think, in small pictures such as you are painting of me, stand unrivalled. This is sufficient merit; do not then pretend to be that which you are not, and probably from your avocations never can be—a scholar.'" If Harlow, in the vanity of his heart, desired to impress on Knowles an idea of his scholarship, surely the man was much more than properly punished by the ireful interrogations and insulting advice of Fuseli. But it was not in the character of the latter to be otherwise than overbearing, except at unlooked for times, when he put on an aspect of mildness, and softened his voice into mercy that he might make men stare.

Harlow was now in his thirty-first year, and though the harmless vanity of wishing to be thought a scholar might still cling to him, other vanities had been subdued or dismissed. He had sobered down the Parisian folly of his dress into that of an English gentleman: he had conquered his inclination to be rude and indelicate when wine was on the table; and those who formerly lamented that they had invited a dissolute and regardless man to their boards now gladly gave him an opportunity of practising before their

[1] "From high Jove thundered. When the Virgins heard
The voice of heaven they shuddered, and fell down,
And with their faces on their fathers' knees,
Lift up their voice and wept."

SOPHOCLES, *Œdip. in Col.*

wives and daughters the new-taught proprieties and courtesies of life. It is said that he had affected a sort of swagger in his gait, and unlicensed audacity in speech, from a belief that they became him, and that it was proper to mark out a man of genius from the well-dressed crowds who parade our streets and fill all public places. Those acquainted with human character may, however, have remarked, that much of this parade of singularity proceeds from a desire to be distinguished for *something*. The man who courts notoriety through eccentric conduct and unusual costume will gradually relinquish both as he rises in real fame; and when reputation is acquired it is a thousand to one if he is to be known by his manners or his dress from any other person of like station. It was considered as a proof of Harlow's determination to persevere in his reformation, that he resolved to go to Rome and study—where all are counselled to study—in the Vatican.

In the month of June, 1818, Harlow left England for Italy. The object of his journey was chiefly to acquire the art of drawing the human figure with purity and precision—an art in which the English never excelled, and which, perhaps, too few of us appreciate. It is, indeed, plausibly urged, that as our national modesty refuses to endure the sight of naked beauty, there is no use to learn to produce what no one can find a market for. But those who argue so should consider that an ill-made person can never wear clothes gracefully; and that a mis-shapen body will show its deformity through the most voluminous draperies. See to how many shifts of grouping, and dressing, and colouring, Reynolds was driven, that he might hide his want of knowledge in the drawing of the human form. And when one so eminent in the proprieties of art can scarcely be said to have more than succeeded, what must become of those who have not the half of his mastery? Of Harlow's improvement in drawing, the full-size transcript which he made—and that with unexampled rapidity—of the Transfiguration, will sufficiently testify. Canova was so much pleased with the beauty of the copy, that he said, "This, sir, seems rather the work of eighteen weeks than of eighteen days." Nor did he stop there: he intro-

duced the English artist to the Pope, and made him a member of the Academy of St. Luke—an honour sparingly conferred on British painters.

The best account which I have been able to find of the studies and feelings of Harlow during his stay at Rome is contained in a letter to Mr. Tomkinson, of Dean Street, Soho, London, dated 23rd November, 1818, from "4, Piazza Rosa, Secondo Piano in casa di Poliodori.[1]—The chief part of my labours are now at an end. Having, since my arrival, made an entire copy of the Transfiguration, the next was a composition of my own, of fifteen figures, which created no small sensation here. Canova requested to have the picture at his house for a few days, which was accordingly sent, and on the 10th of November upwards of five hundred persons saw it: it was then removed to the Academy of St. Luke's and publicly exhibited. They unanimously elected me an academician, and I have received the diploma. There are many things which have made this election very honourable to me. You must understand that there are two degrees in our academy—one of merit, the other of honour; mine is of merit, being one of the body of the Academy. West, Fuseli, Lawrence, Flaxman, and myself are the only British artists belonging to St. Luke's as academicians. Raphael, the Carraccis, Poussin, Guido, Titian, and every great master whom we esteem, were members. I had the gratification to see my name enrolled in the list of those illustrious characters. As this fortunate affair has taken place, I should wish it added to the print of Queen Catherine's Trial, and worded thus—'Member of the Academy of St. Luke's, at Rome.' I wish this, as it is a grand plate; indeed, it ought to be added. I expect to be in England by Christmas Day, or near it. I was much pleased with Naples; stayed ten days; went to Portici, Herculaneum, and Pompeii, and ascended Mount Vesuvius. This was a spectacle the most awful and grand that I had ever witnessed. The fire bursting every two minutes, with a noise like thunder, red-hot ashes came down continually where I stood sketching, many of which I brought away. The eruption took place a week or two

[1] Printed in Smith's "Life of Nollekens," vol. ii.

after I had left. Pompeii exhibits the most extraordinary remains of antiquity in the world: a whole city laid open to view; the habitations are unroofed, but in other respects quite perfect. The house of Sallust, the Roman historian, was particularly gratifying to me; it was unaltered in every respect, except the furniture, the same as it was eighteen hundred and fifty years ago, when inhabited by him. Rome has been the scene of great gaiety lately. I was at three splendid balls given at the different palaces; we were obliged to appear in court dresses, and the cardinals added much to the richness and grandeur of the party. I am to be presented to the Pope; Cardinal Gonsalvi will let me know when the day is fixed. I leave Rome directly after: I have become so attached to the place and the people, that I expect a great struggle with myself. I should be the most ungrateful of human beings if I did not acknowledge the endless favours they have bestowed on me. It is the place of all others for an artist, as he is sure to be highly appreciated if he has any talent. I shall speak of the country to the end of my days with the most fervent admiration."

The end of poor Harlow's days was not so remote as he imagined when he finished that letter. Having given a picture of "The Presentation of the Cardinal's Hat to Wolsey in Westminster Abbey" to the Academy of St. Luke's at Rome, and having left a portrait of himself with the Academy of Florence, in return for being made a member, he embarked for his native country, and arrived in London in January, 1819. Lord Burghersh, our ambassador at the court of Florence, had paid him many attentions abroad, equally kind and polite; and Lord Liverpool, who ought to be praised as often as he is named, caused all his packages to be passed at the custom-house without charge or examination. He had, however, hardly re-established himself again in his house, 83, Dean Street, Soho, and set his easel ready to show to the world how largely he was a profiter by his visit to Italy, when he was suddenly attacked by a disease, called by the learned the Cynanche parotidæa, and by the vulgar the mumps; which, after several days of the severest suffering, terminated his life on the 4th of February, 1819, in the thirty-second year of

his age. He was buried under the altar of St James's church, Piccadilly—Sir William Beechey, Henry Bone, the celebrated enamelist, and other artists and friends being present.

Of the person and peculiarities of Harlow I have already said, perhaps, enough. It has been well observed by one of his biographers, "Let a young man of genius, when he begins the world, be as faultless as an angel, he will find it impossible to escape censure: he should, therefore, avoid all peculiarities of private manners, if he can. Every young painter should read what we now write, and remember it; if he be morbidly inclined, he will find attempts made to goad him into despondency; if irritable, to irritate him into anger; if amiable, to heap calumny and falsehood upon his gentle nature, to lower him to the level of some impotent imitator, to negative his reputation, and sink him in spirit and in health." There is no question that the free manners and unbridled tongue of Harlow were sorely against his rise here; and that he owed his rejection by the Royal Academy less to his want of influence, than to his conduct and conversation. It cannot be denied, nevertheless, that, except in a certain want of decorum, he was in his worst days no worse than many other artists, and better, as far as a generous nature goes, than many who prevented his admission to honours which his pencil richly deserved. As an artist, he was eminently skilful in colour and in human character, and handled his subjects with unusual taste and grace: but he discovered, after all, no new way of awakening our emotions; he followed the beaten track in which others trode, and perhaps his highest fame is that of having had some of his heads mistaken for the work of Lawrence. Painters acquainted with the minutiæ of drawing, the trick of light and shade, and all the often-practised spells which go to make up a picture, might, it is possible, discover some traits of difference between Harlow and his brethren, which, to a professional eye might seem important. I have looked for such things in vain, and described his works as they appear to me; and shall conclude with the generous words of Lawrence, "that he was the most promising of all our painters."

BONINGTON.

IT is often the pleasure of the Creator to unite a fine genius with a frail body: the former ripens into excellence, and the latter fades and decays; and both sink prematurely together, for in death they may not be divided. Of these, one of the latest and worthiest was Richard Parkes Bonington. He was born in the village of Arnold, near Nottingham, on the 25th of October, 1801. For one whose life was to be brief, his parentage was fortunate: his father, a follower of art in his youth for amusement, resorted to it in manhood for subsistence, painted landscapes and portraits, and likewise taught drawing in some of the public schools around Nottingham.[1] Bonington

[1] Allan Cunningham, it would seem, was somewhat mistaken in the view he took of Bonington's father. The grandfather of Bonington was, it is true, a highly respectable man, who held the position of governor of the gaol in Nottingham, in which he was succeeded by his son Bonington *père*. But this latter gentleman was of an erratic disposition, holding violent political opinions, which he had not the wisdom to keep to himself; so that at last, after many irregularities, such as being taken up "for riotous and disorderly conduct," he was obliged to resign his appointment. After this he set up as a portrait painter, on what grounds do not appear, and also published a few coloured prints. About this time he married a young lady of the name of Parkes, and friends helped them to set up a ladies' school at Arnold, a village about five miles from Nottingham. It was here that their only son, Richard Parkes, was born. The school was afterwards removed to Nottingham, and was for a time successful; but Bonington *père*, who, as Mr. Redgrave says, seems to have been one of that unhappy class born to be the torment of others, soon, by his imprudent conduct, broke up his wife's school; and having made Nottingham probably too hot to hold him, he was driven to seek shelter in France, whither his wife and his son Parkes accompanied him in 1816. This was just about the time when what is known as the *bobbin net fever* had seized upon the inhabitants of Nottingham. Everyone thought to make a fortune out of this new industry, and, among others, the elder Bonington, who, with two partners named Clarke and Webster, set up a manufactory for this bobbin-net lace at Calais. The

was therefore born and nursed in the bosom of art; and we are told that when only three years old he sketched almost every object that presented itself to his observation: this might be; but making all allowance for his advantages, one can scarcely be prepared to credit the story which adds, that even at that infantine period he not unfrequently ventured to make designs. When fame finds a man of genius out, and the world begins to take some interest in him,—if he is a poet, his accidental jingles in the nursery are called to memory as proofs of early inspiration; and if a painter, his hideous and unmeaning scrawlings with ink or with cinders are set down as designs and sketches requiring thoughts stronger than what childhood has to bestow. I find it gravely asserted, that "some specimens of these precocious efforts are still in the possession of his parents: they are chiefly drawn in pen and ink, with surprising accuracy, and illustrative of history;" but that a child three years old should illustrate the history which he could not read, appears to me, I must own, a story that would require the faith of a Hohenlohite.

Though not such a miracle as this, it is nevertheless true that he drew and sketched with considerable accuracy, and even taste, when but some seven or eight years old; and this is wonderful enough in all conscience. We must, however, consider that his father directed his studies, and made him familiar from his cradle with works of art, and guided his hand in sketching. He perceived, indeed, a wonderful aptitude in the boy; with a father's love he watched over his progress, and with an artist's skill showed him the true and immediate way. He supplied him not only with those ready subjects for exercise which the print-book and portfolios contain, but conducted him into the

partnership was dissolved in 1818; but Webster and Bonington appear to have still carried on a trade in Nottingham lace, which they sold at a shop in the Rue des Tournelles in Paris. Parkes Bonington was only fifteen at this time, but he had already, probably from childhood, as Cunningham affirms, shown a decided taste for art, and, on arriving in Paris, he immediately sought permission to study at the Louvre, and was afterwards entered as a pupil at the Institute. He studied also under Gros for a short time; but Gros is said to have counselled him to follow his own taste, and devote himself simply to landscape.—Ed.

fields, and bade him study the pasture hills, the ruined towers, the running streams, the busy birds, the unfolding flowers, the light and shade of the forest, and in all, and in more, find matter for his pencil. From books and prints the student gets but a very little of what nature has to tell him; what he sees there is fixed and unchanging; but the face of nature is as changeable as a cloud; the tree each day wears a new look; the hill and dale alter their livery; the flower puts out a fresh blossom, opening more and more in the sun; the light-and-shade of the woods, as the winds arise, or the day brightens or darkens, flits and varies; and the bird's nest begun but a week ago is become to-day a mansion of singular masonry, with four speckled eggs and an anxious dam. The student who desires true knowledge must go forth with his sketch-book, like Bonington, and, considering nature as his academy, take sittings at all seasons and under all influences. Her loveliness and varieties are not to be learned elsewhere than in her lap. He will know little of birds who studies them stuffed in the museum, and less of the rose and the lily who never saw anything but artificial nosegays.

During these early days the general education of Bonington was not neglected. He made such progress in learning as enabled him to acquit himself as a gentleman when the use of his pen was called for; he could not, however, lay claim to the rank of a scholar. Indeed, to anything like scholarship, few of our artists have any pretension: subdivision of labour, so much admired in this age of extravagance and economists, limits men's views too exclusively to the immediate pursuit which brings bread or fame; and as art, unlike "the learned professions," holds out no allurements to those born in the circles of wealth and worldly honour, the Royal Academy has to recruit its ranks from those whom the impulse of nature may chance to call from the workshop or the plough to hold the pencil or the chisel. The learning of Fuseli—of which he always made the most—was the terror for many years of his less accomplished brethren: on the strength of attainments which would have been accounted moderate enough anywhere else save amongst artists, he ruled with all the

insolence of a Swiss, a Greek, and a Grammarian; he who could quote Pindar in the original had no chance of being contradicted by any one in authority during the presidencies of either Reynolds, West, or Lawrence.[1]

Nottingham stands far inland, and amidst scenes made interesting by the adventures of Robin Hood. But of Robin and his chivalrous outlaws, and their haunts in the "deep greenwood," Bonington appears never to have been enamoured: a love of scenery of another kind than what his native place offered came upon him in his thirteenth or fourteenth year. Living far from the coast, and knowing the sea from rumour alone or from paintings, he became immoderately attached to scenes in which land and water meet; and before he ever saw the ocean, his pencil had imagined it agitated by the storm, when the spray, in the words of the old poet,

"Upswept by angry gusts, fills all the air."

Nor did he love it less when the storm had ceased, the undulation had subsided, and the sea-fowl and sunshine were sporting together in the bay. Our best landscapes are of mingled land and sea; and our finest scenery is to be found on the coast. When, in after-life, Bonington had an opportunity of comparing his conceptions with the truth of actual nature, he found that he had seized the grand and leading features, but had missed those subordinate charms which lend such allurements to landscape. It was wonderful, indeed, that one living so far inland should become fond of maritime scenery, which he could only peruse in descriptions or paintings: it must be considered, however, as a sort of providential direction of his mind; the sight of the works which awakened it fell like a spark of gunpowder, and called him up in his best and truest spirit. His finest productions are chiefly of this nature, and show at once poetic feeling and power of hand. He refuses to take nature rough, rugged, and raw, as he finds her; he

[1] I suspect there is bitter truth in an observation of Mr. Lockhart's in the "Quarterly Review"—"Quote Lycophron, and Homer will be taken for granted."

softens down her asperities, raises a little her commonplace expression, and gives a lustre to the air, a loveliness to the earth, and an interest to "the untillable and barren deep," which are only to be found in fortunate moments.

One of the obstacles which genius has not seldom to surmount is the opposition of relatives and friends: it is pleasing to give advice, since it implies superiority; and it is wonderful with what self-complacency a dull old man will lecture a fiery youth on plans of study and habits of thought, in which he himself could never have shared. It was otherwise with Bonington: he was instructed by his father, and encouraged by his mother; for both believed that he would surely live to honour them by rising to eminence in art. When fifteen years old, such was his skill of hand, and such his readiness of conception, that his father resolved to give him the advantage of other instruction than his own,[1] and accordingly carried him to Paris, and applied for leave to study in the Louvre. This was readily granted to a youth who carried with him such proofs of capacity; and the keepers of that fine national collection are represented as wondering at the skill with which the English boy transferred to his own paper or canvas some of the fairest landscapes of the Italian and Flemish schools.[2] I cannot help regretting, however, that Bonington was carried out of his native land before his mind as well as body had grown to man's estate. Had he

[1] This, as before noted, was not exactly the motive of the journey to Paris.—Ed.

[2] Delacroix, in a letter to Théophile Silvestre, speaks of having met Bonington when he was studying in the Louvre. "Je me rappelle," he says, "que quand je faisais des copies au musée, très-jeune moi-même, je voyais là un grand enfant de quinze à seize ans qui faisait de son côté des aquarelles d'après les grands maîtres: C'était lui. Ces aquarelles étaient déjà magistrales et pleines d'une verve, qui contrastait avec son apparence tranquille." Delacroix speaks of him also in another letter, published in Burger's study of Bonington, and extols his surprising facility in water colour, which was then, as he remarks, "une nouveauté anglaise." Where he had learnt this use of water colours does not appear, unless he had been taught by his father. It is clear, however, that he must have acquired some skill even at this early time, or he would scarcely have attracted the attention of Delacroix.—Ed.

studied at home he would have grown up more vigorous, more original, more British, than he did; and would have sought and found, in home scenes and home history, subjects worthy of his deepest study and richest colours.

I mean not, however, to accuse him of servility of imitation; nay, the French themselves, who, indeed, admire him as much at least as we do, acquit him of this. "The scenes," writes his foreign biographer, "which he designed without any principles, indicated great intelligence; he imitated, but with ease and spirit. He was but barely sixteen years old when we saw him first, and had not acquired the mastery of the science on which all beauty in art depends. As soon as he acquired the power of expressing his conceptions, his brilliant works became the wonder of the school. His companions saw that he would not follow servilely any system, though recommended by a professor; and that he was not born to copy others, but create for himself. The chief of the school was obliged to reproach him for inattention to the precepts which he delivered on picturesque painting; and from the obstinacy of his genius it was soon evident that he would walk in his own paths alone, at whatever risk. His spirit was independent, and despised routines. He escaped from that by removing from the school, where the task assigned to genius is the art of putting a figure together, and where the rudiments of old compositions are sacred. He left the academy as soon as he had studied the living model, and could draw it correctly." From the French school he did not escape without a taint: on a mind so tender as his the precepts and examples, which he would not follow, had, nevertheless, some influence; and France, Italy and England have all contributed to that kind of composite style in which his chief paintings are executed. In forming a style out of the works of many nations, in the hope of creating

"That faultless monster which the world ne'er saw,"

an artist is apt to lose in original vigour what he gains in elegance; and, desiring to produce works adapted to the taste of all the world, may chance to miss the felicity of

being thoroughly and completely fascinating to any one nation.

The praise which the Parisians bestowed, and the money which Bonington made by the rapid sale of his works, whether originals or copies, encouraged him to remain longer than had been at first contemplated.[1] He mixed much with the artists of Paris; became, without much profit, a student of the Institute, and drew sometimes in the *atelier* of M. le Baron Gros. But his chief pleasure was in making drawings of sea-coast and river-side scenery: to blend land with water, and both with cloud and sky, was a favourite theme; the motion of the sea, the moving of ships, and, more than all, the laborious and picturesque toils of the fisherman. To these he added fish-markets: nor did he throw an atmosphere of Billingsgate over such homely scenes; he considered them rather as places of repose and contemplation, than of vulgar bustle and noisy chaffering; and though a fish is nowhere so beauteous as when swimming in its clear native stream, the pencil of Bonington gave them all the beauty which the market stall will allow. On his canvas

> "The stately salmon sail,
> The trouts bedropp'd with crimson hail,
> And eels weel kenn'd for nimble tail,
> And geds for greed;"

and he portrayed with equal clearness the characters of the motley buyers and sellers who thronged the market. His favourite study seemed to be the drawing of the net, and the laying of the fish on the pure sands, on the line of shells and pebbles which marks the limits of the tide, or on the greensward bank. The old looked on them with an eye calculating their value; the young, with wonder at their shining scales and changing colours. So much were his merits felt in Paris, that the moment a drawing of any

[1] He first exhibited at the Salon in 1822, when he contributed two water colours, "A View at Lillebonne" and "A View at the Havre." For these two works he received a premium from the Société des Amis des Arts of 430 frs.; so that it is evident, from the very first of his becoming known, he attracted attention.—Ed.

scene was exhibited, purchasers came and contended for it. His second drawing, a marine subject, obtained him a gold medal, at the same time that similar distinctions were awarded to Constable and Fielding, and Sir Thomas Lawrence was enrolled a member of the Legion of Honour.

Having acquired fame and money in Paris, he resolved to travel into Italy; and of all the cities of that rich region Venice was the favourite of his pencil; and well might it be so, since he found for streets, canals—for coaches, boats—while no such thing as the sound of wheels was to be heard. "It is more like a city about to go to sea," he observed, "than like a town built on dry land and attached to the earth." Here he was at home, and set up his easel, resolved to take some sittings from the queen of the Adriatic.[1] These were chiefly studies on a small scale, taken like a speech in short-hand, to be expanded into proper dimensions, and clothed with all the attractions of colour, at the first favourable opportunity: some were, however, done in oils; one of these was the Ducal Palace, and another the Grand Canal—works which alone would suffice to give this artist high rank amongst the landscape painters of Britain. When the first of them was exhibited in the British Gallery,[2] a critic and connoisseur came up to me in a sort of ecstasy and said,—"Come this way, sir, and I will show you such a thing—a grand Canaletti sort of picture, sir, as beautiful as sunshine and as real as Whitehall." To this new marvel I was accordingly led. There was a reality about it, which left no doubt of its excellence as a likeness; but I must own I fancied it rather too literal, too much like the production of a sworn surveyor, to claim a very high place amongst works of genius.

[1] The views he took in Italy completely established his reputation. They are indeed imbued with a wonderful feeling for the charm of Venetian beauty and poetry.—Ed.

[2] Bonington sent two pictures—views on the French coast—to the British Institution in 1826, which attracted immediate attention, and were highly praised in England, where he had not before been known. In the following year he sent a view on the French coast to the Academy; and, in 1828, the year he died, he exhibited three subjects, namely—"Henry III. of France," "The Grand Canal," criticized by Cunningham, and a "Coast Scene."—Ed.

The painting of the Grand Canal is a nobler work, equalling the same scene by Canaletti in truth, and surpassing it far in poetic effect. It is, indeed, but two rows of houses, as I heard a critic sneeringly say; but then the houses of Venice are not like the brick-stack structures of London—they are of a splendid and picturesque architecture; and the deep water which supplies the place of pavement, carries on its bosom a freight of gondolas busied in pleasure or in commerce, and gives a new species of enchantment to a scene otherwise eminently beautiful. Had Byron seen this painting, he could not have concealed his rapture, for it comes up to his notion of works of art. "I know nothing," says the poet in one of his letters to Mr. Murray, "of painting, and I detest it, unless it reminds me of something I have seen or think it possible to see; for which reason I spit upon and abhor all the saints and subjects of one half the compositions I see in the churches and palaces. Of all the arts, it is the most artificial and unnatural, and that by which the nonsense of mankind is most imposed upon. I never saw the picture, or statue, which came within a league of my conception or expectation; but I have seen many mountains, and seas, and rivers, and views, and two or three women, who went far beyond it—besides some horses."

Bonington was more than a mere landscape painter. He included within his scene whatever naturally and properly belonged to it: on the sea-side he had fishermen; on the sea itself ships under sail, with all their mariners—pinnaces and barges, with freights of beauty: ashore, he gave to the garden ladies playing on the lute, or listening to the song of the bird or of the lover; he peopled his walks and groves with life, and showed no common skill and taste in his groups and figures. In this he resembled Gainsborough, whose peasants are not the least pleasing part of his landscapes. Nor did Bonington desire to depict merely an acre or two of nature, and trust to the literal reality of his scene for success: he knew that nature presents much to the eye on which art has no colours to squander; he therefore singled out scenes which, either from extreme loveliness, from picturesque effect, or old

association, he knew would please, and these he handled with singular ease and delicacy. It cannot be denied, however, that most of his Italian pictures are tinctured with his feeling for some of the great masters of the pencil. Instead of being contented with looking at what lay before himself, his desire was to borrow the eyes of Canaletti, or some other favourite of days gone by. All this gratified the connoisseur, but not those who judged from nature; to look like Canaletti with the former was a grace, with the latter a deformity. There is a painful precision about Canaletti—a disagreeable slavishness of fidelity, resembling that of the painter who drenched his field of battle in blood, for the purpose of proving how heroic the contest had been. Bonington had not the half of this minute precision, and yet he had too much; but his brilliant and poetical colouring threw a lustre over these mechanical over-accuracies.

He tried all the styles of painting below the historical, and attained eminence in them all: moreover, he tried all the methods of the various schools; and it was one of his "imaginations" to combine the fidelity of the Dutch, the vigour of the Venetians, the science of the Romans, and the *sense* of the English, all in one grand performance. This wild scheme, which even the poetic and fervent Fuseli had considered impracticable, was looked upon by Bonington as a matter of no great difficulty: his French biographer regrets that he did not live to put such a plan into execution; and mentions, that he had selected a series of subjects from the history of the Middle Ages, on which to make the experiment. His "Henry the Third of France" may be considered as a specimen of what he aimed at. That piece showed at once great knowledge of colour, skill in composition, and attention to costume—all wonderful in an artist so young;—yet it failed to make any impression on the committee of Academicians who arranged the pictures in our English Exhibition. They placed it close to the floor; and as position, with them, implies their estimation of merit, this fine painting suffered under the twofold disadvantage of a bad light and the implied disapprobation of the Royal Academy. Yet thousands stooped to look at

it; and many went away wondering why a work, which deserved a conspicuous place, should be put where none could see it fairly. The newspapers, I ought to add, noticed and reproved this conduct in the Royal Academy. Besides works of the nature I have described, it was his intention to paint a series of pictures similar to that of the Grand Canal of Venice. His mind teemed with extensive projects; and, as his conception was quick, and his execution rapid, much was looked for from his hand.[1]

I know not whether Bonington was at all aware in these days that a visible decay had come upon him; and that in the regretful opinion of many he was a man marked out for an early grave: whatever he might feel or surmise, he said nothing, but continued to employ his pencil with all the ardour of the most flourishing health. He rose early and studied late; nor did he allow any piece to go hastily from his hand. The French, who are quick in discerning and generous in acknowledging merit, not only applauded his works from the outset, but watched his progress and improvement, and eagerly compared the marine paintings of the young Englishman with the standard works of the artists of their own country.[2] M. Gros, who, it seems, had

[1] Besides his paintings, Bonington left a large number of engraved and lithographed works. His lithographs especially are highly esteemed by connoisseurs. They show remarkable skill of hand, with that fine sense of colour that only a painter is likely to transfer to work in black and white. A catalogue has been lately published of his lithographs and engravings ("Chronique des Arts," 1872-73). Among these may be mentioned his plates in that magnificent work, "Voyages pittoresques dans l'ancienne France;" also those in another work of the same class, "Restes et fragments d'architecture du moyen age," and a series of views in Scotland. These views are mostly idealized compositions rather than direct transcripts from nature, but they show a great feeling for poetic beauty, and a charming sense of colour. They are, in fact, like his paintings, eminently *picturesque*. No other word seems to describe them so accurately.—Ed.

[2] The French have always esteemed Bonington's works very highly: indeed, so great is their admiration for him, that they will scarcely allow that he was an Englishman, but call him "our Bonington." He met with so much patronage in Paris that he was enabled to live in good style in a house in the Rue St. Lazare, that he fitted up with galleries for exhibiting his works. At his death highly flattering notices of him appeared in all the French papers, especially in "Le

for some unrecorded reason closed his *atelier* against him,[1] was so touched by his fine works, that he ere long recalled him with commendations; and, in the presence of his pupils, said, he considered it an honour to have him in his studio. A more moderate style of rapture was to be expected from his own countrymen; nevertheless, cold as English approbation of talent may seem, his works were welcomed here as few works of art have been welcomed. His extreme modesty was somewhat against his success: he was fearful of being thought presuming and forward, and has been known to shrink from introductions to men of rank and talent, from a doubt of his own deservings. A letter to me from Mrs. Forster, a lady distinguished by her own talent as well as from being the daughter of Banks the sculptor, contains the following passage:—"When Bonington visited England, in 1827, I gave him a letter of introduction to Sir Thomas Lawrence, but he returned to Paris without having delivered it. On my inquiring why he had not waited on the President, he replied,—'I don't think myself worthy of being introduced to him yet, but after another year of hard study I may be more deserving of the honour.' The following spring he went to London with his pictures: those which brought him such well merited fame. He carried a letter from me to Sir Thomas, which he presented, and was received into his friendship: but alas! it was of short duration; for the great success of his works, the almost numberless orders which he received for pictures and drawings, together with unremitting

Globe," from whence probably Cunningham's account was chiefly derived. A memoir in the "Gentleman's Magazine" gives, however, fuller details regarding his early life. There is a fine painting by Bonington in the Louvre, where he is classed among the artists of the French School, and his works have always sold for high prices in Paris. Engravings of them are also to be found in most French print shops.—Ed.

[1] This statement, which was made in the "Athenæum" at the time of Bonington's death, has been since denied. M. Paul Mantz, writing on Bonington in the "Gazette des Beaux Arts," calls it "a tissue of improbabilities." In truth, according to Delacroix's testimony, who is most likely to have known, as he was Bonington's intimate friend, Gros always had a high esteem for his pupil's talent, but wisely advised him to follow the bent of his inclination towards landscape.—Ed.

study, brought on a brain fever,[1] from which he recovered only to sink in a rapid decline." All other accounts concur with that of Mrs. Forster, in attributing his illness to the accumulation of pressing commissions: he viewed the amount with nervous dismay; he became deeply affected; his appetite failed; his looks denoted anguish of body and mind; a quick and overmastering consumption left him strength scarcely sufficiont to bring him to London, where he arrived about the middle of September, 1828. The conclusion of his career was thus related to Mrs. Forster by Sir Thomas Lawrence:—"Your sad presage has been too fatally verified; the last duties have just been paid to the lamented Mr. Bonington. Except in the case of Mr. Harlow, I have never known, in my own time, the early death of talent so promising, and so rapidly and obviously improving. If I may judge from the later direction of his studies, and from remembrance of a morning's conversation, his mind seemed expanding in every way, and ripening into full maturity of taste and elevated judgment, with that generous ambition which makes confinement to lesser departments in the art painfully irksome and annoying.

> "'But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
> Comes the blind Fury with th'abhorred shears,
> And slits the thin-spun life.'"

Having not quite finished his 27th year he died calmly on the 23rd of September, 1828, and was interred in the vault of St. James's Church, Pentonville, in the presence of Lawrence, and Howard, and Robson, and the Rev. J. T. Judkin—himself a skilful painter—an ardent admirer and steadfast friend.

Bonington was tall, well, and even to appearance strongly

[1] It was in Paris that this fever struck him, owing to his having remained exposed to the hot sun while sketching in the open air. He got over the fever, but it would seem that it must have undermined his constitution, for he sank in rapid consumption soon after he arrived in London, whither he had journeyed to seek advice from the celebrated Mr. St. John Long. His drawings were sold at Sotheby's after his death, and realised £1,200. There is a fine collection in the Print Room of the British Museum.—Ed.

formed. "His countenance," says the French biographer, "was truly English; and we loved him for his melancholy air, which became him more than smiles." The memory of his person will soon wear away; but it will fare otherwise with his fame. He lived long enough to assert his title to a high place amongst English landscape painters, and had produced works which bid fair to be ranked permanently with the foremost. They are not numerous, but for that very reason they will, perhaps, be the more prized.[1] A series of engravings, amounting to some four-and-twenty, has been published by Carpenter, from pictures of this artist, some in his own possession, some in the galleries of the Marquess of Lansdowne, the Duke of Bedford, and other patrons of art. The best of these are the landscapes; and of the landscapes, the worthiest are of mingled sea and land—pieces distinguished by great picturesque beauty, and singular grace of execution. His practice was to sketch in the outline and general character, and then make accurate studies of the local light-and-shade and colour. His handling was delicate and true, and his colouring clear and harmonious. It cannot, however, be denied that he wants vigour and breadth; that his more poetic scenes are too light and slim; and his express copies from nature too literal and real. He was a softer sort of Gainsborough, with more than his grace, and with not a little of his taste for scattering happy and characteristic groups among landscape scenes—but, it must be added, with only a far-off approach to the *strength* of that great master. That, had his life been prolonged, he would have risen to very high distinction, cannot be doubted. It was his generous dream, we are told, to acquire a competency by painting commissions, and then dedicate his time and pencil to historical compositions—a dream which many artists have dreamed; but his works have little of the epic in them. Nature

[1] "The Column of St. Mark's," in the National Gallery, is perhaps the best known of his painted works in England. It was first exhibited at the British Institution in 1826. Several oil paintings have appeared from time to time at the Winter Exhibitions at Burlington House.—Ed.

gave him good advice when she directed his steps to the surf-beat shore, and bade him paint the swelling tide, the busy boats, fishermen drying their nets, and the sea-eagle looking from the rock upon his wide and, to him, fruitful, dominion.

COSWAY.

RICHARD COSWAY was born, in the year 1740, at Tiverton, in Devonshire. His father was master of the public school there; his uncle was for some time mayor; and the family (originally Flemish) owned considerable property in the town and neighbourhood. One of his ancestors, a person of substance, and skilful in the manufacture of woollen cloth, emigrated, in the reign of Elizabeth, from the Low Countries, to escape oppression of body and soul under the fierce Duke of Alva; and establishing the woollen manufacture at Tiverton, grew rich and prosperous, and purchased the estate of Combe-Willis, within some five miles of that place. The connection of the family with Flanders, and a taste for works of art, which it seems some of the elder Cosways possessed, had brought various pictures of the Flemish school, among the rest, two from the hand of Rubens, to Tiverton; and it is alleged that the sight of these awoke a love for painting in the mind of Richard, which, at first, met with but little sympathy at his father's fireside. The master of Tiverton school saw, with astonishment, his son, at the age of seven years, neglecting his lessons, devoting all his time to what he called "the idle pursuit of drawing." Admonition first, and then chastisement, were employed without effect; and it was only on the interposition of his uncle, the mayor, and a judicious neighbour, of the name of Oliver Peard, that the boy was permitted to make drawings during such periods as could be spared from his education. In process of time the rude outlines of the young artist became more elegant and regular; and by the time he was thirteen years old his sketches were of such promise as to warrant his removal to London, where he was placed, first, under Hudson, with whom Reynolds had studied, and next under

Shipley, who kept a drawing-school in the Strand. The expense of his studies was defrayed by his uncle, the mayor, and by Oliver Peard; nor did Cosway prove unworthy of their care and generosity: his skill in drawing became so great, that in the course of a few years he obtained no less than five premiums, some of five, and one of ten guineas, from the Society of Arts. The first was conferred when he was but fourteen years old; the last when he was under four-and-twenty.

Of the early days of the artist, Smith gives, in his own rough style, a very different account:—"Cosway," says he, "when a boy, was noticed by Shipley, the proprietor of the drawing-school in the Strand, who took him to wait upon the students, and carry in the tea and coffee, which Mr. Shipley's housekeeper was allowed to provide, and for which she charged three-pence per head. The students, among whom were Nollekens and my father, good temperedly gave Dick, for so he was called, instructions in drawing, and also advised him, finding him to have some talent, to try for a prize in the Society of Arts." Smith must have had this account from his father, or from Nollekens; but from inquiring among the connections of Cosway I have learnt nothing which confirms the story—much that contradicts it. That a youth related to opulent families, and supported in his studies by the voluntary aid of admiring neighbours, should have been obliged to become a waiter in such a place as Shipley's, is hardly credible, and must be rejected as a fiction. There is more truth in the statement, that "he was employed to make drawings of heads for the shops as well as fancy miniatures, and free subjects for snuff-boxes for the jewellers, mostly from ladies whom he knew; and from the money he gained, and the gaiety of the company he kept, he rose from one of the dirtiest of boys to one of the smartest of men."

This very natural change arose from the money he made in the art of miniature painting, in which he was acknowledged a master. The skill with which he could bring an ill-formed face within the rules of beauty, communicate lustre to eyes naturally dull, and colour to cheeks from which the rose had fled, and yet maintain enough of like-

ness to the original, was not likely to go unrewarded. To rise from indigence to affluence, and step out of the company of indifferent daubers into that of lords and ladies of high degree, could not be accomplished, Cosway imagined, without putting on airs of superiority, and a dress rivalling that of an eastern ambassador. His affectation was not unobserved by his brethren: his fine clothes, splendid house, and black servant, were offences after their kind; and caricaturists gratified their spite and replenished their pockets by satirising him as the "Macaroni Miniature Painter." The man whom Dighton drew, and Earlom engraved, was likely soon to be heard of; and their united lampoon upon him, as "Billy Dimple sitting for his Picture" (now very rare), had no small effect at the time. Nor has Smith failed to favour us with a sitting of Cosway in his days of state and solemnity; he is a master in wardrobe painting. "I have often," said he, "seen Cosway at the elder Christie's picture sales, full dressed in his sword and bag, with a small three-cornered hat on the top of his powdered toupée, and a mulberry silk coat profusely embroidered with scarlet strawberries." Such was the dress of those whom princes delighted to honour, before change, as with a besom, swept away, among some worse and many worthier things, all this magpie splendour.

The consequence which Cosway thus early in life assumed, he was prepared to maintain both by his talents and assiduity. He seems not to have coveted earnestly the applause which follows the painting of works of a high historic order, though he tried his success in that unprofitable style as well as Barry and Fuseli: he aspired rather to reign king in the little pleasing paradise of miniature;[1]

[1] A school of miniature painters had continued to flourish in England from the time of Hilliard, the Olivers, John Hoskins, and Samuel Cooper, mentioned in the "Introduction," vol. i., until the time of Richard Cosway, who may be regarded almost as the last eminent painter of the race. An excellent opportunity of becoming acquainted with the works of this school, most of which are now rare, was afforded by the exhibition of miniatures that was added this winter (1879) to the usual subjects exhibited at Burlington House. The Queen, who has some very choice miniatures at Windsor, lent a case of very early examples by such painters as Holbein, Isaac Oliver, Peter Oliver, Samuel

to gratify the ladies by the softer graces of his pencil was, he thought, honour enough; and in that kind of flattery no one excelled him. He had, however, other claims to public notice; his drawings from the antique were graceful and accurate: to copy with the pencil the fine flowing outline of a Grecian statue, and catch the true proportions, require a fine eye and a skilful hand; and Cosway seems to have had both. This sort of practice he acquired in the Duke of Richmond's gallery. His outlines caught the eye of Bartolozzi, who, with Cipriani, pronounced them admirable. And as it was believed that Reynolds carried the grand style of Michael Angelo into his full-sized portraits, so was it thought that Cosway introduced a touch of the grace and dignity of the antique into his fashionable miniatures: his commissions augmented accordingly. It is well observed by one of his surviving friends, that "he inclined more to the neat, the graceful, and the lovely, than towards the serene, the dignified, and the stern; and though his admiration of the antique was great, this was modified by his continual studying of living nature, and from a taste for whatever was soft and elegant."

Besides the income which arose from his fine drawings

Cooper, and John Hoskins. The Duke of Buccleuch also, whose collection is very celebrated, contributed a number by Hilliard and the other early masters named, as well as by John Bettes, a pupil of Hilliard's, Lewis Crosse, who painted in Queen Anne's reign, Thomas Flatman, 1633-1688, Richard Gibson, known as "The Dwarf," 1615-1690, John Smart, 1740-1801, Gervase Spencer (died 1763), Nathaniel Dixon, a painter for whom no date is given, and who is not mentioned in Redgrave's dictionary, but who, according to the catalogue of the Royal Academy, painted several of the mistresses of Charles II., as well as George Monk, Duke of Albemarle, and Mrs. Claypole, daughter of Oliver Cromwell. Jean Petitot, *père*, can hardly perhaps be reckoned among the English school, though he lived and worked much in this country; but his son, John Petitot, who succeeded in a measure to his reputation, was entirely English, and Redgrave also reckons Charles Boit, Christian Frederick Zincke, Michael Moser (father of Mary Moser), and Jeremiah Meyer, all of whom practised miniature painting in England in the times of the Georges, as belonging to this country. After these come Samuel Collins, miniature painter to George III., Ozias Humphrey, one of the most distinguished and charming painters of the school, and so to our dapper hero Richard Cosway, in whom the art of miniature seems to have culminated, and henceforth to have declined.—Ed.

and his numerous miniatures, Cosway derived occasional sums from old paintings which he purchased, repaired, and sold to such customers as had galleries to fill or rooms to decorate. This kind of trade, in skilful hands, has been found lucrative; but Cosway, whatever he might earn by his pencil or by his bargainings, was no hoarder: his outlay kept pace with his income. He had expensive tastes: he was fond of old weapons, old armour, old books, and old furniture; and delighted in entertaining his friends splendidly. He wrought, or, as artists prefer to say, studied hard; but he also lived hard: it was his pleasure to spend his money in the society of high and dissipated people, who laughed in secret at his folly, and, while they encouraged his extravagance to his face, derided it without mercy behind his back. They swallowed his champagne, gambled him out of the price of a dozen miniatures at a sitting, and then entertained their friends by giving caricatured accounts of his conduct and conversation, to which the lampoon of Dighton was but a joke. Cipriani used to relate that though Cosway would pass a whole night, nay, nights, in this kind of frivolous society, he never found him in bed, let him call ever so early next morning. He rose with remorse at heart: laboured hard by day to repair the waste of the night; and formed all the while, good resolutions, which dispersed of their own accord when the lamps were lighted, and the hour of appointment approached. Nor did he escape reproach from others, or from himself, for worse transgressions: he was sometimes employed in embodying the loose ideas of licentious associates, and in furnishing lascivious miniatures for snuff-boxes, sold in secret, and produced in company by men whose imaginations are, perhaps, the least delicate parts about them. These offences, however, it is to be hoped, were committed seldom: at all events they happened early in life: and it must also be borne in mind, that manners were, in those days, less restrained than now: our fathers had not our delicacy of eye and purity of speech, though, probably, nothing behind us in any of the essentials of virtue.

Amid all this waste and vanity, Cosway was rising in

reputation. In 1771 he was elected Royal Academician; and imagining it necessary to support his new dignity by fresh efforts of his pencil, he sent to the exhibition, for several successive years, a few pictures chiefly of that kind which pertain to portrait and poetry. The "Rinaldo and Armida" were suggested by Tasso, and the heads were supplied by two of his titled sitters: a miniature in the character of Cupid was of the same stamp; so was the "Child enacting St. John." The "Portraits of a Lady and her Son in the character of Venus and Cupid;" the "Madonna and Child," portraits; and the "Portrait of a Young Lady in the character of Psyche," explain themselves. He exhibited various others; but these were the chief. Their beauty and elegance brought many admirers, and raised a little envy in the bosoms of some of his brethren. It is true that they spoke with compassion of Cosway's glossy and feeble portraits, with scorn of his foppery in dress, and were not a little sarcastic on the fine company which he kept; but then they lamented the sad taste of the times more, and the want of judgment in the high places, and thanked their stars that they had too much genius to be popular. All this Cosway, perhaps, did not know, and certainly could care little for: his good opinion of his own merits covered him as a cloak; and, besides, he was not likely to set down the admiration of peeresses and princes to his want of merit. The houses in which he lived have been held in remembrance. When the caricature of the "Macaroni Miniature Painter" came out, he lived in Orchard Street, Portman Square; when he kept a black servant, and wore a coat of mulberry silk, ornamented with scarlet strawberries, his house was in Berkeley Street; and when he became a husband, and had the Prince of Wales for his patron, he lived in Pall Mall, in the middle lodging of that extensive house built for the Duke of Schomberg.

There were two events in the life of Cosway which had, for a long while, a great influence over him: one was the familiar notice—the painter called it friendship—of the Prince of Wales; and the other his marriage with Maria Hadfield, a young lady of talent and beauty. The notice

of the Prince was pleasing to the man and to the artist. The staid stateliness and quaker-like sobriety of the court of George III. and the gaudy magnificence and reckless gaiety of Carlton House in those days, contrasted like the light and darkness of an historical picture. I mean not to say that Cosway was among the number of those who joined the Prince in his wilder sallies; nevertheless he was of his train, and voyaged with him for a time—

"Down pleasure's stream with swelling sails."

During this period of court favour Cosway married Maria Hadfield. She was a native of Italy, but of English parentage; and, besides her wit and beauty, had such taste and skill in art as rendered her worthy of the notice, when but eighteen years old, of Reynolds and Fuseli, and other masters of the English school. In addition to these attractions there was something romantic in her story. Her father kept a hotel for the accommodation of travellers on the Arno; and such was his prosperity, that he was enabled to live, in process of time, like a wealthy gentleman. Four of his babes died suddenly and in succession; and when Maria, who was the fifth, was born, a trusty servant resolved to keep watch, for foul play was surmised. One day a favourite maid-servant went into the nursery, took the child in her arms, and dandling it, said, "Pretty little creature! I have sent four before thee to heaven: I hope to send thee also." Being instantly seized and interrogated, she owned that she had destroyed the other four children out of love,—for of such was the kingdom of heaven.[1] She was imprisoned for life. Maria was educated in a convent, where she learned music and drawing. On her return home she studied painting, went to Rome for a time, and became acquainted with the first artists, Bat-

[1] The deed was done under the influence of religious fanaticism. The father of the children was a Catholic and the mother a Protestant, and it was agreed that the children should be brought up alternately in the Catholic and Protestant faiths. This poor bigot, however, tried to save those who were to be Protestants by destroying them in infancy. Such, at least, is Anthony Pasquin's version of the story in his "Irish Artists."—Ed.

tomi, Mengs, Maron, Fuseli, Wright of Derby, and contemplated art in the noble sculptures and sublime paintings of the palaces and churches. On the death of her father she desired to go into a nunnery; but her mother, to wean her from this wild scheme, brought her to England, where conversations with Angelica Kauffman shook her faith in the nunnery, and her marriage with Cosway soon sealed her conversion. From this time it becomes the duty of the biographer, in relating the history of the painter, to remember the genius of his wife.

Her foreign manners and extreme youth induced Cosway to keep his wife secluded till she had mastered the language, and, by intercourse with intimate friends, acquired a knowledge of society. She studied art, too, under her new instructor; and with such success, that almost the first time she was seen in public she was pointed out as the lady who had painted some of the most lovely miniatures in the Royal Academy Exhibition. Her reputation was made at once: nothing was talked of but the great youth and the great talent of Mrs. Cosway; and one half of the carriages which stopped at her husband's door contained sitters ambitious of the honours of her pencil. The painter, however, was too proud a man to permit his wife —much as he admired her talents—to paint professionally: this, no doubt, was in favour of domestic happiness, but much against her success in art. The impulse which professional rivalry gives was wanting: and on works which were only to be seen by a few, she wrought with less feeling and care than what artists bestow on paintings which challenge public examination. This was, I have heard, not much to the liking of Mrs. Cosway: she had a desire after excellence in art, and made sketches from Spenser and Shakspeare, Virgil and Homer, and longed to embody them in fine drawing and imperishable colours. When her portrait of the fair Duchess of Devonshire, which, by a refinement of flattery, was painted in the character of the Cynthia of Spenser, made its appearance, there was no little stir. The likeness was excellent, and the poetic feeling not unworthy of the poet.

Cosway, however inexorable in regard to painting, was

more gentle in the matter of music, of which Maria was passionately fond; and, as he had a handsome house and a good income, he allowed her to indulge in those splendid nuisances called evening parties.[1]

The guests were numerous, and of all ranks and callings that had any pretensions to the elegant:—the writer of the last new poem; the speaker of the last best speech in the Commons; some rising star, real or imaginary, in art; the man who made the last miraculous escape from shipwreck, or who had walked into the remotest latitudes; in short, all the lions of London were there, to see and be seen. Lady Lyttelton, the Hon. Mrs. Damer, the Countess of Aylesbury, Lady Cecilia Johnston, and the Marchioness of Townshend were her intimate friends: General Paoli, Lord Sandys, Lord Erskine, and the Prince of Wales, were not unfrequent visitors; and when she desired to have something worthy of public notice, the foreign ambassadors were ready to swell the number of those who listened to the music of "the charming Mrs. Cosway."

Cosway found the house in Pall Mall was unsuitable for the display of his works and his finery, and removed to one more roomy at the entrance of Stratford Place, Oxford Street. Now it happened that the figure of a lion was attached to this new residence; and as the painter was a little man, and, as Smith asserts, "not much unlike a monkey in the face," some wag, whom he had offended, stuck these lines on his door:—

> "When a man to a fair for a show brings a lion,
> 'T is usual a monkey the sign-post to tie on;
> But here the old custom reversed is seen,
> For the lion's without, and the monkey's within."

To take the sting from this dull conceit, the artist removed

[1] It is hinted in many of the periodicals of that time that these parties were not of the most creditable kind, and that Cosway's house was used as a place of rendezvous by some of their noble visitors. Scandal, indeed, seems to have been very busy with this eccentric pair; but Cunningham, who is likely to have been as well informed as others, evidently does not trouble himself to believe in the imputations made against them.—Ed.

to No. 20 in the same street, and proceeded to fit it up in a style of uncommon elegance. "His new house," says Smith, "he fitted up in so picturesque, and, indeed, so princely a style, that I regret drawings were not made of the general appearance of each department; for many of the rooms were more like scenes of enchantment pencilled by a poet's fancy, than anything perhaps before displayed in a domestic habitation. His furniture consisted of ancient chairs, couches, and conversation stools, elaborately carved and gilt, and covered with the most costly Genoa velvets; escritoires of ebony, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and rich caskets for antique gems, exquisitely enamelled and adorned with onyxes, opals, rubies, and emeralds. There were also cabinets of ivory curiously wrought; mosaic tables set with jasper, bloodstone, and lapis-lazuli, having their feet carved into the claws of lions and eagles; screens of old raised oriental Japan; massive musical clocks, richly chased with ormolu and tortoise-shell; ottomans superbly damasked; Persian and other carpets, with corresponding hearth-rugs, bordered with ancient family crests and armorial ensigns in the centre, and rich hangings of English tapestry. The chimney-pieces were carved by Banks, and were further adorned with the choicest bronzes, models in wax and terracotta; the tables covered with old score, blue, Mandarin, Nankin, and Dresden china; and the cabinets were surmounted with crystal cups, adorned with the York and Lancaster roses, which might probably have graced the splendid banquets of the proud Wolsey. His specimens of armour were truly rich." To give life to this elaborate picture of elaborate things, I may add, that Smith once saw the painter in his princely mansion, standing "at the fireside upon one of Madame Pompadour's rugs, leaning against a chimney-piece dedicated to the Sun, the ornaments of which were sculptured by Banks, giving instructions to a picture dealer to bid for some of the Merly drawings at the memorable sale of Ralph Willett, Esq."

Amid all this splendour, Cosway could not be called happy. His skill was still improving, his prices high, and his sitters numerous; nor had any one appeared to excel

him in his own peculiar line.[1] The Prince, too, continued his visits; nor had any one forsaken him in whose friendship he put trust. But he had begun to detect, it is said, among those who seemed most charmed with his music and cheered with his wines, a disposition to ridicule his taste, and laugh at his pretensions. This, to a man who set his heart on the smiles of the world, could not be otherwise than painful. He heard, besides, that sundry of his brethren rated his talents humbly, and considered him as living by the vanity of mankind rather than by his own powers of imagination; but what affected him most was the failing health of his wife. The climate of England was more churlish than that of her native Arno; and amid the smoke and bustle of London, she sighed for the pure air and sunny scenes of Italy. He carried her to Flanders and to Paris. One day, as he walked with her in the gallery of the Louvre, he was surprised at the extent of naked wall, and said, "Maria, my cartoons would look well here,—and, to say the truth, they seem much wanted." These were works of Julio Romano: Cosway prized them highly, and had refused a large price from Russia, saying, he would not sell works of elegance to barbarians. He now offered them as a gift to the French king: they were accepted and hung up in the Louvre; and four splendid pieces of the Gobelins tapestry were bestowed on the painter in token of royal gratitude: these he presented to the Prince of Wales. During this visit to Paris he painted the Duchess of Orleans and family, and the Duchess of Polignac, for the Duchess of Devonshire; yet he appears to have refused to paint either the King or Queen, saying he was there for the health of his wife and his own amusement, and not to study and toil.

The health of Mrs. Cosway seemed improved by the air of France; and, on returning to London, his sitters and her evening parties once more cheered them for a season. But she soon felt that sinking of the spirits coming on which no music could raise or society relieve; and, accom-

[1] It is said that he painted more portraits for presentation by lovers than any ten artists put together of his time.—Ed.

panied by her brother, who had gained as a student in painting the Academy's gold medal, she departed for Rome. Rome, however, she was too much indisposed to reach; and, halting by the way, regained, in a month or two, much of the health she had lost. She remained in Italy nearly three years, expecting every spring and autumn the coming of her husband; at length she commenced her journey home. But she neither found health nor happiness in London: the illness and death of an only daughter threw her upon art once more. To mitigate her grief, she painted several large pictures for chapels, and afterwards went to France, without regard of the war which had commenced between that country and England, and executed, what she considered her masterpiece, a work containing all the pictures in the gallery of the Louvre. The turn which the war took interfered with her stay at Paris; and she was persuaded by Cardinal Fesch to establish a college for the education of young ladies at Lyons: this plan was interrupted; and, with her husband's approbation, she passed into Italy, and formed a college at Lodi similar to that which she planned at Lyons. On the establishment of peace she returned to England. Changes, too, had taken place in that land; but none which affected her own peace, though they disturbed the equanimity of her husband.

Cosway, it appears, was one of those sanguine men who perceived in the French Revolution the dawn of an empire of reason and taste, in which genius and virtue alone would be worshipped: many of his friends indulged in the same pleasing fancies, nay, the feeling infected men of rank as well as talent.[1] It was not to be expected that the Prince of Wales would join in sentiments which affected the crown to which he was heir; though, like the Prince Hal of Shakespeare, he had been wild and extravagant, he now looked forward to "doucely fill a throne," as a northern poet had foretold he would live to do, and had begun to grow more select in his company. The increasing infirmities of his father rendered this necessary; and when

[1] I have seen a curious letter by an English nobleman, signed "Citizen."

he became Regent, Cosway, like many others, looked in vain for the man of other years. The friends of the painter, however, imputed, in part at least, his loss of princely favour to his deficiency in the arts of a courtier, and the native pride of his heart. "He thought himself overlooked and neglected: conscious of his abilities, he disdained to stoop, or entreat, or flatter; and imagining that his enemies had got the better of him, he neglected his profession, by which he had risen, and looked with suspicion even on his firmest friends. As his own character was open and generous, his disappointment was the bitterer; he made no attempt to retrieve his influence with the Prince, and he never retrieved it." These are the words of one who knew Cosway well, and who thinks he had occasion to say with scripture, "Put not your trust in princes."

His latter years were passed in pain, bodily and mental; a paralytic stroke deprived him of the use of his right hand, and with it cut off one chief source of pleasure, the power of drawing. His wife watched patiently over him, and tried to render pleasant the many sad hours he was now obliged to spend without other solace; and by her assiduity and affection atoned for the years which she had sojourned out of his household, making experiments in pictures and ladies' colleges. She considered her solicitude to be amply rewarded by the feeling of performing her duty, and by hearing her husband speak of art. His conversation was, to her at least, gay and imaginative.[1]

[1] Hazlitt gives a graphic account of Cosway in an article in the "London Magazine." He says of him: "Happy mortal! Fancy bore sway in him, and so vivid were his impressions that they included reality in them. The agreeable and the true with him were one. He believed in Swedenborgianism—he believed in animal magnetism. He had conversed with more than one person of the Trinity. He could talk with his lady at Mantua through some fine ventricle of the sense, as we speak to a servant downstairs through an ear-pipe. . . . . He would read in the book of Revelation without spectacles, and foretold the return of Buonaparte from Elba and St. Helena. His wife, the most lady-like of Englishwomen, being asked in Paris what sort of a man her husband was, answered: "Toujours riant, toujours gai." This was true. He must have been of French extraction. His soul had the life of a bird, and such was the jauntiness of his air and manner, that to see him sit

He loved to look at his collections of drawings, at his old armour, at his innumerable curiosities, and talk about the ancient masters of the calling, and imagine what they would say were they now to revisit the earth, and see the civilized grown savage, and the savage civilized. Nay, he sometimes startled such visitors as did not know his way, by saying, with a serious air, that he had just had an interview with Praxiteles and Apelles, and the former recommended a closer study of the living figure to the English academy, and the other a less gaudy style of colour. These things, to the dull and unimaginative, sounded strange and ridiculous; while others thought them lessons worth remembering. Once, as he sat at the dinner of the Royal Academy, he turned to one of his brethren and said, "Pitt, while he lived, discouraged genius; he has seen his error now. He paid me a visit this morning, and said, 'Cosway, the chief fault I committed on earth was in not encouraging your talents.'"—"Ay, that was merely to soothe your vanity," said his friend; "for Pitt, after he had seen you, called on me, and said, 'Now, mark! Cosway will tell at your dinner to-day that I waited on him and expressed contrition for not having employed his talents,—don't believe one word he says, for he will tell nothing but his own absurd inventions.'" "I have heard Cosway relate conversations," says Smith, "which he held with King Charles I., so seriously, that I firmly believe he considered everything he uttered to be strictly true." It is a pity but Smith could have returned this civility by reading to him a page or two from his life of Nollekens.

An old and esteemed friend, Miss Udney, called one fine morning to give the ailing man an airing: he was better than usual, and gayer, and said kind words to his

to have his half-boots laced on, you would fancy that, instead of a little withered elderly gentleman, it was Venus being attired by the Graces. His miniatures were not fashionable, they were fashion itself. When more than ninety he retired from his profession, and used to hold up his palsied right hand that had painted lords and ladies, and smile with unabated good humour at the vanity of human wishes. Take him with all his faults and follies, 'we scarce shall look upon his like again.'" (W. Hazlitt on Fonthill Abbey, "London Magazine," vol. vi.)—Ed.

servants, as they supported him to the carriage. In some twenty minutes or so his wife heard the sound of the returning wheels: she hastened down stairs, and found her husband lifeless. This third and last attack came on him on the way to Edgeware; he fell back, and died without a groan, on the 4th day of July, 1821, aged eighty years. He was buried in Mary-le-bone, and a monument raised to his memory, in which Art, Taste, and Genius are made to lament his loss, in the terms of the following indifferent epitaph:—

> "Art weeps, Taste mourns, and Genius drops the tear
> O'er him so long they loved who slumbers here.
> While colours last, and time allows to give
> The all-resembling grace, his name shall live."

In person, Cosway was small and well made: he had an important and bustling air; affected the polished gentleman, and the man who was the Prince's friend; loved to be painted with a hat and feather on, and to be spoken of as an artist worthy of taking rank with Reynolds and Rubens. He long hesitated whether he should be buried in his native Devonshire, or be placed in the vault with Rubens at Antwerp.[1] Humbler thoughts, however, came over him on hearing a sermon from Wesley, on death and the grave. He followed a funeral into the vaults of a London church, and seeing the gilt mountings, and the orderly way in which the coffins were arranged, said, "I prefer this to Antwerp or St. Paul's: bury me here." He was in his nature generous and kind. Mrs. Cosway said the number of letters sent to him requesting pecuniary aid was incredibly great. He gave freely, and promised more. Borrowers who never repaid him, and sitters from whom he never asked payment, formed a long and a not untitled list. His execution was rapid: he often finished miniatures at three sittings of half-an-hour each; and when he sat down to dinner, would boast that he had

[1] He was buried in Mary-le-bone church, where a tablet, erected to his memory, may still be seen. Cosway occasionally painted in oils. One of his largest and best pictures in this medium he gave to the church of his native town, Tiverton, in Devonshire.—ED.

despatched during the day twelve or fourteen sitters. His knowledge of the human figure, as it appeared to the sculptors of old, and as he found it in life, was equal or superior to that of most of his contemporaries. His outlines were accurate and elegant; his manner was partly from the Roman School and partly from his own experience; and he considered it a beauty in his compositions that they resembled more the deep sober hue of Italian painting, than the gaudy glow of that of England. As his miniatures are chiefly confined to the chamber and the cabinet, the works of Cosway are less widely known than they deserve. His fame is fading; such must be the fate of all who paint only the living faces around them, and seek not to embody sentiments familiar to the human heart, and which affect all mankind. Cosway had lived too expensively to leave much wealth behind him. His accomplished widow still survives him,[1] and resides at her beloved Lodi, where she has established her Ladies' College, and is widely known and respected.

[1] I cannot find the exact date of Maria Cosway's death; but the last thing that was heard of her, according to S. Redgrave, was her being seen heading a procession of her pupils going to the cathedral, bearing a long ivory cross in her hand, and draped in a sky-blue robe, spotted, with velvet stars. She was, it is said, a very beautiful woman; and many accounts, especially foreign ones, speak of her as possessing more talent than her husband. Besides her miniatures, she drew well in chalk, and designed several of the subjects for Boydell's "Shakespeare Gallery" and Macklin's "Poets." In 1800 she published a series of plates entitled "The Progress of Virtue." She likewise etched some of Cosway's works. Her sister became the wife of Combe, the author of "Dr. Syntax."—Ed.

DAVID ALLAN.

GENIUS is natural to all parts of the earth; lives where it chooses; works in its own way, and to please its own spirit; and is sometimes content with local fame. Of this class of unambitious men was David Allan, fondly called by some of his countrymen the Scottish Hogarth. But though his fame is chiefly confined to Scotland, and though it was his pleasure to aim at little beyond delineating the humble tenants of the cottage and the shieling, he is not unworthy of a place amongst those artists who had higher aims, and whose fame has been farther diffused. He was the second son of David Allan and Janet Gullan, his wife; and was born February 13, 1744, at Alloa, in Stirlingshire, where his father held the situation of shoremaster. His birth was attended by mournful and somewhat romantic circumstances:—"In consequence," says the family account, "of a fright which she got, and the delicate state of her health, he was born in the sixth or seventh month of his mother's pregnancy, who died a few days afterwards, and no nurse could be found whom he could suck in the neighbourhood, owing to the smallness of his mouth. At length a suitable one being heard of, the child, which was both little and weak, being wrapped up carefully, was laid in a basket among cotton, and carried by a man on horseback, to be suckled by a woman who lived at some distance from Alloa. In consequence of a recent storm, the snow was lying very deep on the ground; the horse stumbled, and both the rider and his tender charge fell. The infant was thrown out of the basket, and received so severe a cut on his head, that the mark it left remained till his death."

The tender care of his nurse, and the sympathy of a neighbouring lady, who frequently took the poor babe into

her carriage, when she went out an airing, brought strength to his delicate frame: he in due time returned to his father's house, more vigorous than had been hoped for, and with little or no appearance of premature birth upon him. At school he acquired, without being remarked for either dulness or capacity, reading, writing, and arithmetic, —the three solid foundations on which knowledge rears her structures; and that he acquired any more in later years has not been asserted. When he grew up, intercourse with society, and that insight into human nature which his profession demands, enabled him to fill a respectable station, to the satisfaction of the inhabitants of Edinburgh, during a period when skilful judges were not scarce among them. He was too modest to claim scholarship, from a smattering of Latin picked up at the parish school.

The love of art, which seems in some as natural as flowers to the field, came accidentally, we have been told, upon Allan. When very young, some eight years old or so, he got one of his feet burnt, which kept him from the school, and likewise confined him to the house. His father, a man averse to idleness, said, with a smile, "You idle rogue, you cannot go to school, and are losing the little you know. Here, take this piece of chalk, and write on the floor." The poor boy did as he was desired; but, tiring of writing, he began to amuse himself with drawing figures,—rude, indeed, and uncouth, but which pleased his own fancy. From this time the chalk was seldom out of his hand: he drew houses, birds, and beasts; and before he was well enough to return to school, had made some attempts to delineate the human figure. All this seems, for a time at least, to have been unheeded by his family. His father married a second wife: and his mother-in-law had children of her own to attend to. It was left to the schoolmaster of the parish to find out the bent of Allan's genius; and the circumstances of the discovery were to himself otherwise than pleasant.

It seems that the schoolmaster was something old, near-sighted, and vain. It was his practice to pace along the floor among his scholars, dressed in a long tartan gown,

with a tartan night-cap on his head, and a rod of correction in his hand, which he applied, in times of irritation, with much severity. David, now eleven years old, was so struck with the ludicrous figure which the teacher made while punishing with difficulty some stout refractory boys, that he sketched the group on his slate, and exhibited it to his companions: the startling laugh which this occasioned drew the attention of the *Dominie*, who, though sand-blind, detected the resemblance; and, incensed at being caricatured among his scholars, bestowed a smart chastisement on the culprit, and then complained to his father. Old Allan, when he heard of the talents and the petulance of his boy,—

"Knew not whether to rejoice or mourn."

It was necessary, however, to withdraw him from the school, which he did, admonishing him, at the same time, for insulting one whom he should rather have honoured. "I could nae help it," said little David; "he looked sae queer: I made it like him, and a' for fun."

The story of the caricature was told to all who inquired why the boy had left the school; and, amongst others, to Mr. Stuart, Collector of Customs at Alloa, who had the sagacity to perceive something like genius in his rude attempts. He advised, at once, that he should be placed in the academy of Glasgow, then newly established by the patriotic printers, Robert and Andrew Foulis. About this time a new spirit began to appear in Scotland. At first the promise was great; the enthusiasm of many young men knew no bounds, and the seats of the Academy were all but filled with students eager to gain a name in art. The establishment wanted, however, influence to support and skill to direct it. Foulis was but a fine printer and a *connoisseur:* high examples of historical art were not then so abundant as now; the public eye had not been familiarized with those miracles of genius, native and foreign, which now crowd our galleries; in short, the country was not in a condition to profit by the boon so readily bestowed by those enterprising brethren. The Western Academy had, however, shown no symptoms of decay, when, on the

the 22d of February, 1755, young Allan was apprenticed to Robert Foulis, to learn the arts of drawing, painting, and engraving. Of his success in these branches of art his future works must speak. Much that he performed during his servitude was necessarily of a preliminary nature; yet he made such progress as enabled him, before he left the Academy, to sketch a picture in oil colours, showing the interior of the painting-room, with the students at their tasks, and Foulis giving his instructions. This picture is now in Newhall House, near Edinburgh. Allan always spoke with warmth of the kindness of Robert and Andrew Foulis; and when in process of time his own name had risen, and their fortunes, from speculations in art, had sunk, he did all that he could to sustain them. He left Glasgow with a high character for talent and steadiness.

Allan had been born on the lands of the Erskines of Mar, one of the most ancient families in the North, and who, in their prosperous days, loved to encourage genius wherever it was found. On his return to his father's house, he was introduced to the family of Erskine by Lord Cathcart, whose seat was in the same district. Something like a meeting of the influential and the tasteful of the neighbourhood seems to have been held on the occasion, in which the merits of the young painter were discussed, and all agreed that he deserved to be sent to Italy for improvement. We have known very rash judgments formed in such matters, and seen young men sent to Rome on the fruits of a subscription who had not talent for a tailor. In the case of Allan, however, the result was more fortunate. He heard of the kindness of his friends with no little gladness of spirit. As his means were small, his arrangements were soon made; and in the summer of 1764 he was on his way to the Eternal City, with high hopes in his heart, and sundry letters of credit and introduction in his pocket. "We need not give you a letter," said his patrons, "to Gavin Hamilton (son of the Hamiltons of Murdiston, in Lanarkshire); for he is the unsolicited friend of every deserving artist. Should his character be altered, let us know, and you shall have a regular introduction." This

estimate of Hamilton's character was just: he aided Allan in every way that could be most acceptable to a youth of spirit and talent; and considered himself rewarded when, in process of time, his young friend gained, first, a silver medal for his skill in drawing; and, secondly, the gold medal of the Academy of St. Luke, for the best historical composition. He was the second Scotsman found worthy of such honour (Hamilton himself was the first).

The picture which gained him so acceptable a prize is one of great merit, both in conception and drawing, and certainly excels anything else, in the same style, which Allan ever painted. The subject is the old poetic dream of the "Origin of Painting; or the Corinthian Maid drawing the Shadow of her Lover." The youth is sitting; he keeps himself firm with his left hand, extends his right gently round the waist of his mistress, and holds his face in repose: the maid sits on his knee, places a lamp, with a clear steady flame on one side, touches his chin modestly with her left hand to keep it in its position, and with her right guides the pencil along the outline of his face, which the light delineates in shadow on the wall. There is happy elegance and serene grace about the group which have seldom been surpassed; and I have heard Wilkie praise it as one of the best told stories that colour and canvas ever united to relate. Some of those suspicious people who never believe that genius works for itself, whispered that Hamilton had a hand in it; but this must have been uttered in ignorance of Gavin's character and talent: he was incapable of practising such delusion; and the group, in outline and in breadth, bears the marks of a very different hand. It was engraved skilfully by Cunego, and the painter's name made known far and wide.[1]

[1] This picture formerly hung in St. Luke's Academy in Rome, but it disappeared from the walls with several other paintings by British artists about 1827, and no one seems to know what has become of it. It was spoken of by Gavin Hamilton in high terms of praise, and Mr. Andrew Wilson, the distinguished Scotch landscape-painter and master of the Trustees' Academy, records, in some notes on Scotch painters, kindly placed at my disposal by his son, that, when he saw it in 1801, it "pleased him very much." He says, "In Rome, David Allan was much thought of, and considered a historical painter of great promise. He

How long Allan remained in Italy has not been settled with certainty. All we *know* is, that in 1764 he left the Academy of Glasgow; and that in 1777 he was in London. How he had employed himself during his stay abroad is equally a matter of speculation. That he painted "The Prodigal Son" for Lord Cathcart, "Hercules and Omphale" for Sir W. Erskine of Torrie, and made four humorous sketches of Rome during the Saturnalia of the Carnival, is well enough known; but these, and others which might be named, together with numerous drawings in chalks from some of the old masters, could not well occupy ten or eleven years. It must, however, be borne in mind, that the manufacture of paintings wearing the lineament and hue of Raphael, Titian, Correggio, and other eminent hands, was carried in those days to an astonishing extent. The picture-dealers who supplied our galleries with the simulated commodity were always on the look-out for young adventurers, who had skill enough to make a fair copy, but not to make a good bargain,—and that Allan found employment of this kind there is little doubt. In truth, with the exception of Reynolds, almost all our English artists of those days eked out their allowance money by such labours.

Of his sketches of Roman folly during the Carnival we shall now speak. They are four in number:—1. "The Opening of the Carnival." 2. "Politeness of Romans to Strangers." 3. "Horse Race at Rome." 4. "The Victor conducted in Triumph."—They seem to have been suggested by the election pictures of Hogarth, and abound in ludicrous situations and festive character. Some time afterwards, Paul Sandby engraved them; and the painter published descriptions in prose along with the prints. "The Carnival," says Allan, "is the most cheerful and

made many drawings of familiar subjects: some of these, especially of peasants, were full of taste and beauty, and remarkable for their fidelity in conveying a correct idea of the habits of the people." It would seem from this that he was, as one may suppose, more employed in painting country scenes in Italy than in making copies of old masters. He did not stay all the time in Rome, but lived in Naples and other towns.—ED.

brilliant festival of the Romish Church. It begins on Twelfth Day. All distinctions of rank and station are confounded in an instant on the ringing of the great bell of the Capitol, the signal of general permission to wear the mask in public. This licence is not abused. Although all Rome and its environs assemble in the streets, yet no bad manners nor riots interrupt the general festivity: priests and the religious orders are forbid the mask, and all imitation of the dresses of the Church are forbid. Neither fancy nor imagination are checked by this order: the characters of different nations, or of particular districts of Italy, are supported by groups of masks: triumphal cars are filled with ladies and gentlemen in elegant dresses; others, assuming the devices of poetic, or Gothic, or even of the heathen mythology, are conducted in triumph along the streets: bands of musicians and players go in the same manner: balconies and stages are filled with people, all contributing to the entertainment: a few guards are to be seen here and there, to preserve order. At the sound of the evening bell, all people unmask, and retire to the playhouse, the tavern, or their home; and all is peace again."

The first picture exhibits the effect of tolling the bell of the Capitol on the crowds assembled in the Piazza del Popolo and the Corso. "In the middle is a harlequin dancing with a Fraschetana girl; a lady and gentleman of Nettuno standing by; near these is a Jewish family, and a Punch joking with the wife; a modern painter in an ancient dress, showing the Obelisk to an English lady; behind, is a Knight of Malta; a sweetmeat crier; in the corner, a French grenadier in the Pope's service; a trumpeter on horseback in the skin of a bear. On the foreground is an improvisatore poet speaking extempore, accompanied by the calasone instrument, with a dwarf begging. Near the Obelisk are two Italian barbers masked, imitating a French abbé and his valet; the abbé is looking with scorn at the car with music; a dignitary of the church, with his cross and muff, is walking near."

The second picture carries us before the palace Ruspoli in the Corso, where there is a good view of the horse-race

and masquerade. The city marshal is in attendance as a kind of orderly to receive the commands of strangers admitted to the Ruspoli balcony: the whole scene is something motley. "A demon selling horns by the side of a girl in male attire; a flower-girl dressed in laurel leaves; a girl with a book and wand; a fortune-teller; a boy and dog masked." It is customary on occasions such as this for lawyers to appear in the dress of Punch, and enter into witty disputations; an encounter of this kind is represented; a notary is near with his papers; a *sbirro*, or spy, is at hand; a Roman tradesman wrapt in his cloak listens, while a Punch, gallanting a lady, is discovered to be a friar, and a boy writes his name on his back. The scene is altogether bustling and lifelike.

The third picture "exhibits the humours of a horse-race without riders: the horses are trained to the task; small spurs are fixed on their backs, so as to prick them forward; the narrowness of the street keeps them on the course, and they are stopped at the winning-post by blankets stretched before them: the natural spirit of the animal causes him to bite and kick, and strive as much as may be to get to the end of the street. The governor stands ready to give the prize to the victor; a man on an ass, as courier, in driving through the crowd, upsets an abbé gallanting a lady; a gentleman passing, in aiding the latter, discovers her to be his wife; one of the Pope's guards is smiling at the sight: near them is a Punch eating macaroni, Spaniards and Frenchmen saluting, a German drinking, and a Bolognese doctor offering his services. In the middle a Roman jockey is telling an English brother of his craft how barbarous it is to force horses to run with men on their backs;"—the latter, of course, is laughing.

The fourth and last of the series shows the victor horse conducted to receive his covering of brocade, the reward of his triumph: a constable clears the way; and the surrounding groups are as motley as in the other pieces.

Such were the pictures which this Scottish artist drew of Rome and her people, during their days of merriment and revelry. They approach, in their nature, to caricatures; nor has he always been able, as some of my readers

may have already guessed, to tell the story with the pencil, so clearly as he has described it with the pen. The Italian horseboy, who ridicules the barbarity of the English practice of running horses with a load of flesh, bones, boots, and spurs, on their backs, might be talking of anything else, for aught that his looks express to the contrary. This kind of delusion, however, is common to artists: they see sentiment and story, where others can only see figures; and suppose they have made everything plain, when all, save to themselves, is mysterious. The Mercury putting off his sandals, on the title-page of the "Diversions of Purley," appeared in the eyes of Horne Tooke to be putting them on.

It is to these four prints, and some half-dozen more, representing the manners and customs of the Italians, that Allan owes his name of the Scottish Hogarth. But the works on which his hope of fame depends are of a different character; they go deeply into the social feelings and rustic manners of his native land, and are not at all of the caricature race; in truth, they are akin to the inimitable works of Wilkie, of which they may be called the forerunners.

We are not prepared to say that Rome, with her paintings and statues, was beneficial to Allan. For the art which he studied there, his native land, when he returned to it, offered no market. Runciman had already experienced the delusion of all such dreams in Scotland; and Fuseli, his friend, was now proving that England cared little for historic aspirations. That Allan, however, had indulged in hopes of historic fame, we have his own words to prove. He laments, in writing to Gavin Hamilton, that he found little or no opportunity of practising at home those precepts in painting which he learned while in Rome; and laments, as scores have since done, over the universal rage for mere portraiture. Let us dismiss then, without further remark, all his attempts in the classical department; all his copies of other men's works, whether in oil or in crayons; be silent about his landscapes, whether Scottish or Italian; nay, pass over, without observation, the two years during which he lived in London, manufac-

turing portraits; and convey him at once to Edinburgh, where, on the 14th of June, 1786, he was installed Master of the Academy of Arts—a situation made vacant by the death of Runciman, and which his talents and acquirements seemed well fitted to adorn.

We have heard, however, that Allan, as master of the Academy, neither merited censure nor deserved praise. His style of drawing was even less correct than that of Runciman. His manners were winning; but he had not the art of exciting enthusiasm in his disciples. He filled this office with fair esteem and no more, for ten years.

His income was small, but his wants were few, and he had now leisure to plan and accomplish a work, which, we understand, had been present to his thoughts in early life. This was an edition of Allan Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd," illustrated with landscapes and groups, copied from the scene where the pastoral drama is laid, and from the peasantry of its glens. To do this well, he began the right way: he visited New Hall, Habbie's How, and every hill, dale, tree, stream, and cottage, which could be admitted into the landscape of the poet. He copied whatever seemed suitable, with fidelity; and as old men and women came wondering around him, he admitted their faces freely into his sketches, and made use of them afterwards in his finished drawings. Glaud's farm-house, the Monk's Burn, the Linn, the Washing Green, Habbie's How, New Hall House, and that little breast-deep basin in the burn, called Peggy's Pool, were all carefully drawn. He was accompanied on this excursion by his friend, Captain Campbell of Glencross, whose looks he complimented in the face of Sir William Worthy. This was his way throughout. As the philosopher refused a candle, and desired to look at the moon by her own light, in like manner the artist imagined he ought to make the living inhabitants represent those shepherds and shepherdesses—shrewd old men and sagacious old wives—through whom the poet had given life and beauty to his landscape. But though the hills, woods, and streams, were those of which Ramsay had sung—the Paties and the Peggys, the Glauds and the Symons, the Mauses

and the Madges of the pastoral, the creations of the Muse, in the spirit, but not in the express image, of rustic nature, were passed away and gone. He resolved, however, to make common-place peasants do the duty of poetic ones; "all the figures," said his brother, "being copied from individual nature, are portraits." [1]

In his dedication to Hamilton, he says, "You must take these designs as a specimen of my occupations: the country gives no encouragement to heroic or historic subjects, and I am glad, therefore, to work in a humbler line; and, without descending to mean and low objects, give a correct representation of ordinary life, which may be made pleasing and instructive as well as morally useful. It seems to be essential towards the advancement of the art of painting in any country, that the country itself should furnish good models, in nature, for the imitation of the artist. In this respect Great Britain has some advantages and some disadvantages. The youth of both sexes are, in general, well formed, well coloured, and of graceful proportions; but in the middle stages of life, and in old age, our natural models are greatly deficient both in action and expression. We rarely see in this country a countenance like that of a Franciscan, or an Italian beggar, so full of character and expression, and so useful to the study of history painting. Yet the nature we have, with the assistance of ancient models, which may be easily procured by casts from the best of the Greek statues and busts, is fully sufficient for all the purposes of study, and might lead to great improvement even in historical painting, were that the general taste of the public."

If Allan expected to find poetic characters ready made, whose forms and expression he had only to copy into his

[1] In a finished water-colour drawing, called the "Highland Festival," that was exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in the winter of 1877-8, there is to be traced, however, a very decided attempt at idealising rustic nature. The figures in this picture are evidently meant to be poetic, they dance in an affected style, resembling the conventional peasants of the stage rather than the rougher specimens of real life. The scene, however, is conceived with much grace, and has a gentle beauty very unlike most of Allan's riotous companies.—ED.

pictures, he looked for what no one has hitherto found. But it cannot be denied that the hills and glens of Scotland abound with original characters: the universal polish, which society seems now in a fair way of receiving, and which wears the impress of originality out of man, as circulation smooths down the king's head on his coin, has not yet penetrated into the remote vales and pastoral districts: where twenty men are met together they present as many distinct characters. Of these Wilkie found more in Fife alone than enabled him to establish an immortal name: but he never dreamed that he should find them quite suited to his purpose; he saw from the first that he must tamper with nature a little—add to this, and withdraw from that—shed more light here, and give deeper shade there, than the green of Pitlessie, with all its rustic wealth of character, could furnish.

Nor is this the only point on which David Allan seems to have gone a wandering. "Ramsay, it is well known," he observes, "composed his 'Gentle Shepherd' in the neighbourhood of the Pentland Hills, where the shepherds to this day sing his songs, and the old people remember him reciting his verses. I have studied the same characters on the same spot, and I find that he has drawn faithfully, and with taste, from nature. This, likewise, has been my model of imitation; and while I attempted in these sketches to express the ideas of the poet, I have endeavoured to preserve the costume, as nearly as possible, by an exact delineation of such scenes and persons as he had in his eye." The hills are eternal, and so are the streams, but man and his manners are as changeable as the clouds; and the costume of 1778, even in these Pentland glens, must have differed widely from that of 1720, when Ramsay's poem was written.

On the whole, though he has not in all his delineations come quite up to the "rudely rustic witty grace" of Ramsay, he has shown much of the right spirit; if he has failed in personifying rustic elegance, he has been more successful in rustic humour; and in his cottage scenes he has not been often surpassed. These designs are twelve in number; of these four are but ordinary either in con-

ception or drawing; four more show original feeling, and an intimate acquaintance with rustic characters and rural things; and the remaining four, particularly where age is depicted, would do honour to any painter of humble life. "The Gentle Shepherd" represents humble Scottish life; and, with many defects, has been pronounced, by one whose judgment cannot be questioned, the only pastoral of nature in the language. The scenes are full of life and teeming with incident; and the story which they contain has now kept its hold of the heart of Scotland for a hundred years.[1]

The first print shows Patie admonishing Roger respecting success in love: he holds up his

> "Dainty whistle, with a pleasant sound,"

in his left hand, extends the other to the neglected pipe of his friend, and is supposed to be uttering those lines regarding wealth which have since become proverbial,—

> "He that has just enough can soundly sleep;
> The o'ercome only fashes folk to keep."

Roger lies disconsolate on the grass, cannot look his companion in the face, and seems resolved to be miserable: his sheep are in the distance; and his dog—one of the finest that we have seen—watches the flock, now disregarded by its master.

The second print introduces us to Peggy and Jenny: and here we begin to perceive the deficiency of beauty in

[1] Allan Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd" seems to have been a source of inspiration to several of the Scotch painters of this time. Wilkie, as we know, took two or three of his subjects directly from it, and many of his early compositions are in the same spirit as that homely national poem. David Allan in many respects may be regarded as the forerunner of Wilkie in Scottish art. Like the Italian masters of the fifteenth century, who prepared the way for the greater masters of the sixteenth century, so he may be said, by his honest attempts at painting national-humorous subjects, to have prepared the way for Wilkie's greater powers in this branch of art. One has only to compare David Allan's "Scotch Wedding," one of the best of his pictures, with Sir David Wilkie's rendering of the same sort of scene in his celebrated "Penny Wedding," to see the progress made in art from the earlier to the later master.—ED.

the actual shepherdesses of Pentland Glen: these maidens are clumsy creatures to say the least. The stream trotting past, the clothes laid out to whiten, and the waterfall in the distance, "which makes a singing din," are the best parts of the picture.

The third print brings Glaud and Symon on the stage: the latter is exclaiming,—

> "And tent me now, auld boy,
> I 've gathered news will kittle your mind wi' joy."

Glaud, more fat and ample of paunch than becomes a Muirland farmer, sits on his sod seat, looking curiously into the face of Symon, who, calling in the aid of his thumb and finger to help his speech, demonstrates by both the occurrence of unlooked-for things; his very hands seem to say, Put that and that together. The thin bent figure of the one contrasts well with the jolly form and gladsome visage of the other: Symon is thoroughly Scotch; Glaud looks as if he had been a sojourner southward of the border.

The fourth design shows Allan in his strength: his old women are as good as Gerard Dow's,—all nature, oddity, and originality. Mause is seated in the sunshine at the door of her little lonely cottage, spinning on a roke, or distaff; her thoughts seem not with the work in hand; they have, it is likely, travelled to Peggy, "her ain sweet lady—her young bonnie bairn." All is composed around her; the cat sits winking and contented; the chickens feed under the shelter of their mother's wing; and all is in repose save Bauldy, who, believing Mause to be a witch, comes for a cast of her skill, yet seems afraid of venturing into the presence of one capable of working such mischievous pranks, and who

> "Gets the wyte of a' falls out."

The fifth piece brings Patie and Peggy together; but the artist has failed in delineating with elegance "two true lovers in a dale:" the heroine wants beauty, and the Gentle Shepherd wants passion: there is nothing to be commended in the design, save the figure of old Madge shouting in the distance to bring the young shepherdess

home.—Sir William Worthy appears in the sixth sketch disguised as a wandering seer; in foretelling the fortune of the Gentle Shepherd, his mystical language excites the wonder of Peggy and Jenny, and wild astonishment in Madge, who, aware of his meaning, seems to cry,

"Awa! awa! the de'il's owre grit wi' you."

It has not escaped the notice of those who like this design, that the artist has indicated the birth of the Gentle Shepherd by hanging the ballad of "Gill Morice" on the wall, and the antiquity of his lineage by the song of "Chevy Chase."—In the seventh print, where Roger has an interview with Jenny, both figures are good, and the expression in keeping with the poet. The shepherd appears humble and supplicatory, and the shepherdess wears a look of quiet humour, which suits the words—

"And what would Roger say, if he could speak?"

Perhaps Jenny has a touch too much of the virago; the inanimate nature of the landscape is worthy of the rest.—Madge, Mause, and Bauldy are brought before us in the eighth print; and here Allan need not shrink from a comparison with almost any other painter of the humorous. The reader must remember the scene in which Bauldy comes rejoicing to tell Mause that Patie has become a "brau rich laird," and as such will scorn the humble Peggy, who must fall to his own share without either witchcraft or conjuration; with the quarrel which ensues between him and Madge. Bauldy is yelling in pain and terror under the roke of the incensed spinster, who is exclaiming,—

"Auld roudes! filthy fallow, I shall auld ye."

His dog takes his part, and pulls her back by the petticoat, while Mause gravely stays, or rather pretends to stay her. The effect of the group is much heightened by Glaud and Symon enjoying the sight over "the stackyard dike."

There is considerable softness in the ninth print, where Patie assures Peggy of the continuance of his love. The

merit, whatever it amounts to, belongs, however, to the lady: the lover is a lout.—The tenth design we consider as one of the most successful. It embodies these graphic lines:—

> "While Peggy laces up her bosom fair,
> With a blue snood Jenny binds up her hair;
> Glaud, by his morning ingle, takes a beek,
> The rising sun shines motty through the reek;
> A pipe his mouth, the lasses please his een,
> And now and then his joke maun intervene."

Though day has only begun, an old female domestic is making porridge: a shepherd, who must be early to the hill, has filled his bicker, which, half asleep as he is, he is emptying again, in all the haste that food as hot as liquid fire will allow. His dog begs in vain for a mouthful. The cock and hens are about to make their exit to the croft or the stackyard. Glaud sits with a face full of glee, looking at Peggy and Jenny bedizening themselves. We would have liked Peggy better, had she been lacing her bodice instead of putting a rose in her bosom. The remaining scenes require no particular description.

Of these designs, and the way in which he prepared the plates for the work, Allan thus speaks:—"I have engraved them in the manner called aquatinta,—a late invention, which has been brought to much perfection by Mr. Paul Sandby. A painter finds his advantage in this method, in which the pencil may be associated with the graver. It will be easily seen that I am not a master in the mechanical part of this art; but my chief intention was not to offer smooth and expensive engravings, but expressive and characteristic designs. How far I have succeeded, it does not become me to say." The artist was not mistaken: the engraving is rude and rough, and quite unlike the smooth and brilliant work produced now. It is, nevertheless, full of nature, which is a compensation for many defects. The poem, united with its illustrations, was beautifully printed in quarto by the Foulises. It was one of the first works of that kind which Scotland had produced, and made the name of Allan popular all over the north.

He was now in his forty-fifth year. His Academy had a fair proportion of students, and yielded him as much as enabled him to maintain a house, and establish something like a studio. A little money arose, too, from such friends as reckoned him skilful in portraits; and as the success of his illustrations for Ramsay opened a new field of adventure, he was emboldened to think of matrimony, and accordingly, in the month of October, 1788, took unto wife Shirley Welsh, the daughter of a carver and gilder in Edinburgh. The lady was much his junior; but she loved the art in which her husband laboured, admired his productions too, and, though his person was otherwise than alluring, she proved a dutiful wife during her short trial of eight years.

Allan's duties in the Academy hindered him not from turning his thoughts to other works; his mind teemed with subjects, domestic and historical. Among the latter we may mention the "Escape of Queen Mary from Lochleven Castle," and add to them his sketches in pencil, or in ink, of some of the most beautiful scenes in Scotland, such as Castle Campbell, Stirling from Alloa, Tulliallen Castle, the High Street of Edinburgh, and many others, for which we are afraid he had neither skill nor colours. His homely subjects deserve more attention. The principal were, "The Highland Dance," "The Scotch Wedding," and "The Repentance Stool,"—the idea of which last, it is said, he took from a satiric poem on that subject, by Pennycuik, called "Rome's Legacy to the Kirk of Scotland," though it is more likely to have been suggested by what he must often have seen with his own eyes, and which has been rendered familiar to English readers by the verse of Burns. Of these, the "Wedding" is the best: it is full of sedate joy, quiet humour, and boisterous glee, nor is it wanting in that sort of wit which belongs more to the hand than to the head. It was engraved in large, and exhibited over Scotland. The likeness was universally acknowledged; and few who saw it could resist open laughter. Such subjects, whether in actual flesh and blood, or seen through the medium of the pen or the pencil, have long been dear to the peasantry of the north. In the

"Christ's Kirk on the Green," from the hand of King James, we have a bridal scene which, for life, humour, merriment, and mischief, no poet has surpassed; nor is the continuation by Ramsay much inferior, though we recognize a coarser feeling. But, what is more akin to our subject, there is a very curious and amusing picture of a "Scotch Wedding," extant still in Drummond Castle, painted not later than 1650. The drawing of the figures is far from correct; but it is, perhaps, the earliest work of the kind existing. The name of the artist is Gordon; probably James Gordon of Rothiemay, who made several views of Edinburgh, with one of Aberdeen, and had them engraved in Holland.

The "Penny Wedding," of which Allan gives us such a lively image, was in his time common in Scotland, and was one of the many ways which the peasantry had of awakening mirth and giving "a day's discharge to care." As soon as a couple of rustics were proclaimed in the kirk, some nimble-footed friend was employed to summon the country round to the bridal. A large barn was cleared of its grain; split sticks were stuck in the walls to hold candles; a table was placed at the upper end for the graver guests, and all that remained of space was surrendered freely to those who paid a shilling, and desired to dance or be social. The bride was queen of the night till the hour of stocking-throwing came. People of condition mingled with the peasantry; the high-born damsel "set, and reeled, and crossed, and cleeket," with the ploughman—while a shepherd girl went down her two dozen couple of a country dance with the lord or a laird, just as it happened. The money raised went to discharge the cost of music and refreshments; and, according as the young pair were liked, they found a larger or smaller surplus to enable them to begin housekeeping.

Burns had commenced his short and bright career, when the rustic pictures of Allan began to take the public attention: he was among the foremost to perceive in the painter much of the truth and nature of which he was himself a worshipper; and although aware of a deficiency in elegance and beauty, regarded, probably, the presence

of fun and humour as a sufficient compensation. During the period in which the poet wrote his incomparable lyrics, it occurred to Thomson, the proprietor of the work for which they were designed, that he might bring in the hand of our painter to illustrate the choicest scenes in Scottish song; some dozen or so were accordingly produced; and several of these embody the images, serious or comic, of Burns. One of the best is "John Anderson my Jo:" the group is truly comic: John is a personification of sly glee and domestic gladness—his eyes seem glimmering with a delight for which he cannot find utterance; his wife, however, is a sad fright,—her aspect would become a scarecrow, yet it pleases her husband, and that is enough.[1] Another humorous subject was still more happily treated. "Allan," says Thomson, "has just sketched a charming design from Maggie Lauder. She is dancing with such spirit as to electrify the piper, who seems almost dancing too, while he is playing with the most exquisite glee." These, and others of the artist's designs, were submitted to Burns, who wrote the following letter to Thomson on the subject of the "stock and horn," a rude instrument of music which Allan was fond of putting into the hands of his shepherds:—"Tell my friend Allan, that I much suspect he has, in his plates, mistaken the figure of the stock and horn. I have, at last, gotten one, but it is a very rude instrument. It is composed of three parts: the stock, which is the hinder thigh-bone of a sheep, such as you see in a mutton-ham; the horn, which is a common highland cow's horn, cut off at the smaller end until the aperture be large enough to admit the stock to be pushed up through the horn, until it be held by the thicker end of the thigh-bone; and, lastly, an oaten reed, exactly cut and notched like that which you see every shepherd-boy have when the corn-stems are green and full grown. The reed is not made fast in the bone, but is held by the lips, and plays loose in the smaller end of the stock; while the stock, with the horn hanging on its larger end, is held by

[1] This "John Anderson my Jo" has been forgotten in that of Burnet, who has all the humour and more than the propriety of Allan.

the hands in playing. The stock has six or seven ventiges on the upper side, and one back ventige, like the common flute. This of mine was made by a man from the braes of Athole, and is exactly what the shepherds are wont to use in that country. If Mr. Allan chooses, I will send him a sight of mine, as I look on myself to be a kind of brother brush with him. 'Pride in poets is nae sin;' and I will say it, that I look on Mr. Allan and Mr. Burns to be the only genuine and real painters of Scottish costume in the world."

As the work of illustration went on, the poet found other opportunities of commending the designs of the painter. "Woo'd and married an' a',"—he says, in one of his letters,—"is admirable; the grouping is beyond all praise. The expression of the figures, conformable to the story of the ballad, is absolutely faultless perfection. I next admire Turnimspike." One of the best, perhaps, is The Gaberlunzie Man. The gladsome looks of the 'paukie auld carle,' the joyous surprise of the young woman in recognising youth and strength where she had expected nothing better than weariness and woe, and the grave solicitude of the matron in matters of household economy, unite to form a picture of true natural humour and humble life. The songs of Scotland—those of the olden minstrels and of Burns,—would have presented a fine field for a painter equal to the task of catching truly and embodying naturally their perpetually blending moods of humour and pathos; but Allan, with all his talents, was deficient in that "art unteachable" of communicating grace and loveliness to the creations of the mind; his touch was too gross to give the more delicate hues of feeling and of fancy, and, though he delineated the coarser features of the offspring of the Muse with considerable skill, it must be acknowledged that the task of painting in the varied spirit of the lyric poetry of the north is yet to be performed.

The fame which Allan acquired by these works soothed him during the slow sapping progress of a dropsical complaint, accompanied by an asthma, which arose from anxious application in a line of study requiring head and hand. His bodily strength was never great, nor had he any liking to the exercises of walking or riding, by which

health is preserved and vigour confirmed. After an illness, of which he scarcely knew himself the commencement, he died August 6, 1796, in the fifty-third year of his age, leaving one daughter, named Barbara Anne, and a son, David, who went out a cadet to India in the year 1806.

In person this painter was under the middle size, of a slender make, with a long coarse face pitted by the small-pox, and hair the colour of sand. His eyes were large and prominent, without animation or fire; his nose was long and high; his mouth wide; and his whole exterior mean and unpromising. On a stranger who met Allan in the street, such is the impression his looks would have left; but in company to his liking he was another sort of person; his large eyes grew bright and penetrating; his manners pleasing, and his conversation open, gay, and humorous, inclining to satire, and replete with observation and anecdote. On the antiquities and literary history of his country he had employed much of his leisure time, and delighted to discourse; he boldly pronounced the stock and horn, of which Burns gave him an account, to be an instrument too rude for producing true music, and fit only for "routing and roaring."

As a painter, his merits are of a limited nature; he neither excelled in fine drawing nor in harmonious colouring, and grace and grandeur were beyond his reach. He painted portraits—which are chiefly remarkable for a strong homely resemblance: he painted landscapes, but these want light and air; and he attempted the historical, but save in one picture, "The Corinthian Maid," all his efforts in that way were failures. His genius lay in expression, especially in grave humour and open drollery. Yet it would be difficult, perhaps, to name one of his pictures where nature is not overcharged; he could not stop his hand till he had driven his subject into the debatable land that lies between truth and caricature. He is among painters what Allan Ramsay is among poets —a fellow of infinite humour, and excelling in all manner of rustic drollery, but deficient in fine sensibility of conception, and little acquainted with lofty emotion or high imagination.

NORTHCOTE.

HE whose life I am about to write was one of those men who rise to eminence in the world more from skill in various departments, than from original excellence in any one. The man who, without much presumption, wrote himself painter, critic, fabulist, and biographer, merits a memoir such as may exhibit his character, and illustrate his pretensions.

James Northcote was born at Plymouth, in Devonshire, on the 22nd day of October, 1746. At times he claimed descent from certain Northcotes who flourished nearly as far back as the Norman Conquest; numbered sundry high-sheriffs of the county amongst his ancestors, and reckoned kin with Sir Stafford Northcote of Pynes; but in his cynical moods he contented himself with humbler ancestry. "All people," he could then say, "are sprung from somebody; and even the Northcotes have an origin: in Devonshire there stood four cottages: one was called Eastcot, one Westcot, one Southcot, and one Northcot: I am of the latter house; and so there's an honest descent, without help from the Heralds' Office." But the vanity of remote ancestry finally triumphed. He left £1,500, by will, to some one who exhibited, from parchments and tradition, a line of descent which reached to the days of William the Conqueror. It was his pleasure frequently to talk of the old families, and importance of his native county. "You are to consider," he said, "that it is almost a peninsula, so that there is no thoroughfare, and people are, therefore, more stationary on one spot; for this reason they intermarry among themselves, and you can trace the genealogies of families for centuries back. There are squires and gentry in that part of the world who have occupied the same estates long before the Conquest,

and who look down upon the Courtenays and others as upstarts."[1]

Whatever the remote ancestors of Northcote were, his father was a humble citizen of his native place; a little active man, a watchmaker, who lived in Market Street, and was well known to the inhabitants of Plymouth Dock, as he made it his business to wind up and regulate their clocks. "His house," says a person who knew him, "had two windows; in one he exhibited watches under repair, and in the other his wife exposed thread, tape, sleeve buttons, and such small matters for sale: he was a quiet and not ill-informed man; and as at that time coffee-houses were rarities, some of the better sort of inhabitants would resort to his shop, and chat for an hour or two on the ordinary topics of the day." He was a man too, of observation and sagacity. "My father used to say," observed the painter, "that there were people of premature ability who soon ran to seed, and others who made no figure till they advanced in life. He had known several who were very clever at seventeen or eighteen, but who turned out nothing afterwards; at that time of life the effervescence and intoxication of youth did a great deal, but we required to wait till the gaiety and dance of the animal spirits subsided to see what people really were."

James was the second son; his elder brother, Samuel, made excellent watches, and improved the barometer. He died early. There was a good grammar-school in those days in Plymouth, under the direction of a clergyman appointed by the corporation: inquiries have been made, but it does not appear that Northcote was a scholar there;

[1] Northcote loved strong expressions: the squires and gentry of Devonshire must have lived in darkness when the Courtenays were unknown, for Gibbon says he discerns their "nobility and opulence with the first rays of light." The Courtenays sat on the throne of Constantinople, and mingled their blood with the royal families of England and France. The great antiquity, however, of some of the country gentlemen's families in Devonshire cannot be disputed. There is a rhyme, for example, in every mouth there, which says—

"When the Conqueror did come,
Croker and Copplestone were at home."

and none of his contemporaries recollect his having been their companion in any school. It is supposed that he obtained the little instruction which he ever received from the minister of a dissenting meeting-house, an Unitarian, it is believed, of whose flock his father and mother were members. He has not said much about his parentage or his education, though he loved to talk about himself. "I never," he observed to Hazlitt, "could learn my lesson at school. My copy was hardly legible; but if there was a prize to be obtained, or my father was to see it, then I could write a very fine hand, with all the usual flourishes. What I know of history and heraldry has been gathered up when I had to inquire into the subject for a picture; if it had been set to me as a task, I should have forgotten it immediately." His scholarship was small: he not only knew no language but his own, but he even knew that imperfectly; and false spelling, in spite of extensive reading, adhered to him till the last.[1] "Jack the Giant Killer is the first book," said he, "I ever read, and I cannot describe the pleasure it gives me even now. I cannot look into it without my eyes filling with tears. It is to me, from early impressions, the most heroic of performances. I remember once not having money to buy it, and I transcribed it all out with my own hand. Had I been bred a scholar, Homer, I dare say, would have been my Jack the Giant Killer." Money could not have been plentiful with Northcote in his boyish days, for the price of "The right valiant Cornish Man" was only a penny.

On looking over his conversations, as recorded by Hazlitt, I see little that refers to his early studies in art: he was not one who delighted in relating how he laboured while a boy, or from whom he obtained his pencils, or to whom he was indebted for advice given in secret, or pictures lent to copy or imitate. I have heard that his progress was slow, and that all he produced was laboriously done: he had no

[1] He evidently did not know much of arithmetic, for, in 1773, he writes to his brother, "If I was to die, I do not know how to keep my accounts myself, but as I used to do, by keeping everybody's money in different papers."—Ed.

first out-flashings; he grew quietly up into eminence year by year. His desire to be distinguished as an artist arose from the fame of Reynolds, whose friendship with the family of the Mudges made him much talked of in Plymouth; and his first attempts are said to have been portraits and outlines, which some blamed and more commended. He was sixteen years old and irrecoverably an artist, when Sir Joshua Reynolds visited Plymouth, accompanied by Dr. Johnson. "I remember," said Northcote, "when he was pointed out to me at a public meeting, where a great crowd was assembled, I got as near to him as I could from the pressure of the people, to touch the skirt of his coat, which I did with great satisfaction to my mind." This is sufficiently enthusiastic, and shows the resolute liking which already possessed him for painting. In the turn which he showed for art, his father saw for a time little but cause for sorrow and vexation: the old man was poor—so poor, that it was said by the members of a little club to which he belonged, that in his supper with them he took his dinner. Besides, he was a dissenter, and dissenters were in those days rigid and zealous; and it is not unlikely that the young artist found his darling pursuit regarded as a thing vain and frivolous by both father and mother. Even in the spirit of his own maxim, his father might dread that all this proceeded from the premature ability, or mental intoxication, which sometimes appears in youth; we must not, therefore, blame him for doubting whether the light by which his son walked was light from heaven, but rather commend him for his anxiety, and for his apprenticing the youth to his own business, in order that he might be enabled to earn his bread and be secured against want.

Whatever were the motives, Northcote was subjected to the unwelcome task of cleaning and repairing watches. No one ever heard him speak of his skill in that business, but it was such as satisfied his father; and when the point was gained, he was permitted, during his evening and morning hours of leisure, to follow his favourite pursuit. He accordingly made drawings and portraits with such success that his father relaxed in his rigidness; and when

the neighbours began to inquire and applaud, he condescended to look on the sketches of "fat Jack," as he nicknamed his son, who was little and lean, and contrasted strangely with a tall and corpulent acquaintance whom the people of Devonport knew by that facetious phrase.

Though Northcote had studied much and drawn much, it is not clear that he made an early choice of art for his profession. Like another genius of a higher order, he might wish to make it a staff, and not a crutch; but, as he grew in years and knowledge, the Muse who presides over painting prevailed against any inclination he might have had for succeeding his father in regulating the clocks of Plymouth. Before the age of twenty-one had released him from his indenture, he had unconsciously fixed his election for life; and though he still continued to follow his business, he forsook it more and more till he found himself strong enough in art to relinquish it entirely. The little that he had earned by his trade was more than replaced by his pencil; and as he was admonished by the poverty of his father to contract habits of care and economy, he required little to keep soul and body together, or to enable him to establish a small studio, and stock it with colours, pencils, canvasses, and drawings. His first painting-room has been described as very small and mean; and its squalid appearance contrasted strangely, in the eyes of every visitor, with the buoyant spirits of its possessor. He continued in Devonport till he was four-and-twenty years old: his acquirements may be briefly described as consisting of a rude knack of drawing character, without much feeling of true proportion, and a slight knowledge of colours, which he was inclined to lay on the canvas agreeably to a perverse notion of his own rather than according to the light and shade of nature.

With the year 1771 the fortune of Northcote began to dawn. The friendship of Dr. John Mudge procured for him the notice of Reynolds; and though it would appear that Sir Joshua shook his head and shrugged his shoulders when he looked on his imperfect drawings and rude portraits, he was prevailed upon to admit him into his house as a student, and give him all the advantages of his gallery.

"If I might now," observes Northcote, "be suffered to say a little of myself, I would declare that I feel it next to impossible to express the pleasure I received in breathing, if it may be so said, in an atmosphere of art; having been until this period entirely debarred not only from the practice of the art itself, but even from the sight of pictures of any excellence, as the county of Devon did not at that time abound with specimens, and even those few which are scattered about that county I had no opportunity of ever seeing; and as, from the earliest period of being able to make any observation, I had conceived Reynolds to be the greatest painter that had ever lived, it may be conjectured what I felt when I found myself in his house as his scholar." It was not likely that Reynolds would take the admiration of his scholar amiss, more especially as he showed not only a proper enthusiasm for art, but such a spirit of study and labour as Sir Joshua had never before witnessed. He rose speedily into favour; he drew late and early; he made experiments in light and shade, and his attempts began to draw the remarks of visitors; nor were his shrewd and witty sayings unnoticed. It was soon rumoured in the circles of art, that Reynolds had imported a Devonshire prodigy, who was likely to rival him in truth of character and beauty of colouring.

The studio of Reynolds afforded other facilities of which Northcote had need, and of which he was sensible. "Among the many advantages," said he, "which were to be gained in the house of Sir Joshua, one of the most considerable certainly was the opportunity of improvement from the familiar intercourse which he perpetually kept up with the most eminent men of his time for genius and learning." Northcote relates, that during the five years which he spent under the roof of Reynolds, he was treated quite as one of the family, and sat at the dinner-table which was lighted up by the wit of Burke and the wisdom of Johnson. This statement has been modified by the explanation of Mrs. Gwatkin, one of the nieces of Reynolds, who says that her uncle's pupils dined by themselves when he had company at his table: when there were no visitors, they dined with the family, took one glass of wine, put back their chairs,

and retired. She felt surprised, she observed, at what Northcote had said in his "Memoirs of Sir Joshua," about conversations which occurred when he could not have been present; and she imagined that he got them from her aunt, Miss Reynolds, who was partial to her townsman and liked to hear him talk.

He not only studied under the roof of Reynolds, but attended the Royal Academy, where he drew from sculpture, and afterwards from the living model. He was quick in perceiving the defects of his fellow-students, and slow in remedying his own. "The glaring defects of such works," said he, "have almost disgusted me with the profession. Is this, I said, what the art is made up of? How do I know that my own productions may not appear in the same light to others? Nothing gave me the horrors so much as passing the old battered portraits at the doors of brokers' shops, with the morning sun shining full upon them. I was generally inclined to prolong my walk, and put off painting for that day; but the sight of a fine picture had a contrary effect, and I went back and set to work with redoubled ardour." That his early productions appeared crude and ill-digested to others, I have been assured by some who studied along with him. The want of decision and truth in his outline was an early fault which, with all his skill, he could never mend; though, like his master, Sir Joshua, he strove, when his palette was prepared, to conceal it in colour. The sharp admonitions which he received gave him a dislike to the Academy, and in after-life he thus entered his testimony against it:—"When the Royal Academy first began, one would have supposed that the members were so many angels sent from heaven to fill the different situations: now the difficulty is to find anybody fit for them; and deficiency is supplied by interest, intrigue, and cabal. Not that I object to the individuals neither. As Swift said, I like Jack, Tom, and Harry, very well by themselves, but altogether they are not to be endured."

Of his studies under the eye of Sir Joshua, he relates that, for the sake of practice, he painted the portrait of one of the female servants. The likeness was so strong,

that it was recognized by a large macaw, which Reynolds introduced in several of his pictures. The bird had no good will to the maid-servant; and the moment he saw her portrait, he spread out his wings, and ran in fury, and bit at the face. Perceiving that he made no impression, he struck at the hand, and then looked behind, and, lowering his wings, walked off. "Sir Joshua observed," said Northcote, "that it was as extraordinary an instance as the old story of the bunch of grapes."

As Northcote's knowledge increased, his confidence increased also: he began to question the propriety of directions given to the students regarding colours, by one of the visitors. Sir Joshua looked at him, and said, "He is a sensible man, but an indifferent colourist. There is not a man on earth who has the least notion of colouring: we all of us have it equally to seek for, and find out—as, at present, it is totally lost to the art." Consolatory words to Northcote! His colouring had improved, and now and then he touched off a bit to the liking of his master; but these were lucky hits—the offspring of chance rather than of principle: he began in the dark, and had not yet got into full light. Having questioned the skill of a common member of the Academy, he ventured to give advice to the President. He had observed, that the colours which parted brilliantly from his master's brush, soon lost their glow on the canvas. "I once humbly endeavoured," said he, "to persuade Sir Joshua to abandon those fleeting colours, lake and carmine, which it was his practice to use in painting the flesh, and to adopt vermilion in their stead, as infinitely more durable; although, perhaps, not so exactly true to nature as the former. I remember he looked on his hand, and said, 'I can see no vermilion in flesh.' I replied, 'But did not Sir Godfrey Kneller always use vermilion in his flesh colour?' Sir Joshua answered, rather sharply, 'What signifies what a man used who could not colour? You may use it if you will.'"

Except what Northcote gained from such testy conversations, or gathered from the practice of Sir Joshua, he was not likely to make much progress in natural colouring under one who considered his knowledge as a part of his

fortune, and concealed it as a spell, which to reveal would undo him. "He would not suffer me," says his pupil, "during the whole time I resided in his house, to make use of any other materials than the common preparations of colour, just as we have them from the hands of the colourman; and all varnishes, and every kind of experiment, were strictly prohibited. Likewise all his own preparations of colour were most carefully concealed from my sight and knowledge, and perpetually locked secure in his drawers; thus never to be seen or known by any one but himself." Sir Joshua might have safely allowed Northcote to make his own experiments in colours; for he had not the patience necessary for prolonged investigation. He was noted, early in life, for a too great readiness of reply to all who noticed defects in his works. He had a reason at hand for all he did; and the most patient soon grew weary of instructing one so very wise and ingenious. The term, too, of five years, which Northcote had in his own mind allowed for study under Sir Joshua, was fast expiring: and he began to look forward to the time when he might make use of any colours he pleased, and have recourse to all manner of experiments. "The latter end of the year 1775 was now arrived," he observes, "when it only wanted a few months of five years that I had been with him, and when I also approached the twenty-ninth year of my age, and I thought it high time for me to do something for myself at so late a period in the life of a pupil, having been prevented, by many causes, from beginning my studies as a painter in early youth." He intimated his wish to his master, when "Sir Joshua, with a gentleness in his manner, said, he thought I was now well able to do for myself. I replied, that I was very sensible of the obligations I owed him, and that I would stay any time longer he should think proper, if I could be of any service to him. Sir Joshua said, by no means, as I had already done him much service. I answered, that I feared I had not been of so much service to him as I wished; but that it was solely from my want of power, and not inclination. Sir Joshua was so very obliging as to say, that I had been very useful to him, more so than any scholar that had ever been with him;

and added, 'I hope we shall assist each other as long as we live.'"

Of his employment in the gallery of Reynolds, it is less necessary to give any detailed account, since he was only allowed to touch subordinate parts, prepare grounds, or make copies for his own benefit in practice and pocket. He disliked the drudgery of copying; and observed with a sneer, "Copying pictures is like plain work among women: it is what anybody can do, and therefore nothing but a bare living is to be got by it." He confessed, that, in common with many students, he was startled when he first began to copy from the living figure in the Academy: his companions were not slow in asserting that he always eyed the female model with something like alarm in his countenance, and that his hand traced, in consequence, a very unequal and undecided line. From studies such as these he retired into Devonshire, where he remained nearly a year, painting portraits for ten or fifteen guineas each, with the purpose of raising a purse weighty enough to carry him into Italy. In this he was aided, it is surmised, by his elder brother, who had already acquired some notice, and was considered the truest genius of the family. With a little money in his pocket, with no knowledge of any language save his mother-tongue, with some letters of introduction to Roman artists in his hand, and with unbounded confidence in his own fortunes, he set out for Italy in the year 1777.

In after-life, when instructing a student, who was on the wing for Rome, what masters to study, and what galleries to visit, he added, "But remember, young man, your chief object is to *steal*." With something of the same purpose, Northcote crossed the Alps. He had seen the memorandum books of Reynolds, in which the most natural and noble attitudes of figures and heads from other masters were noted down to be employed in future works of his own: and it could not have escaped one so observing, that his master had wrought many of them into portraits, male and female. It has been said of Pope, that in all his brethren there is not one happy turn which he has not imitated; and it may be said of Sir Joshua,

that he transferred to his own canvas all the lucky hits and studied excellences of light and shade which he saw amongst the great masters of Italy. But to steal is one thing, and to steal wisely another. To borrow deep colouring from Titian, or divine thought from Raphael, required skill little short of their own. The rogueries of art require to be dexterously done: a celestial hand alone can purloin from the gods. He always spoke with pleasure of his journey. "There may be sin," said he, "in Rome, as in all great capitals; but in Parma, and the remoter towns they seem all one family. Their kindness to strangers is great. I travelled from Lyons to Genoa, and from Genoa to Rome, without speaking a word of the language, and in the power of a single person, without meeting with the smallest indignity: everywhere, both in inns and on the road, every attention was paid to my feelings, and pains taken to make me comfortable."

When he reached Rome, he went to the Sistine chapel, and paid homage, as his master had done, to the presiding spirit of the place. As he looked there and elsewhere, he felt that his dreams of portrait-painting were unsubstantial and unreal, compared to the glories which arose from historical compositions. The more he studied, the more he was convinced that little was lasting which had not its source in science and poetry; and he surrendered his feelings freely to this new impulse. With all his enthusiasm, he perceived, what few artists have done; namely, that neither repetitions of the antique would do in sculpture, nor imitations of Raphael in painting. "It is easy," said he, "to imitate one of the old masters. If you want to last, you must invent something. To do otherwise, is only pouring liquor from one vessel into another, that becomes staler every time. We are tired of the antique; the world wants something new, and will have it; no matter whether it be better or worse, if there is but an infusion of new life and spirit, it will go down to posterity. There is Michael Angelo: how utterly different from the antique, and in some things how superior! there is his statue of Cosmo de' Medici leaning on his hand, in the Chapel of St. Lorenzo at Florence: I declare it has

that look of reality in it that it almost terrifies one to be near it. Is it not the same with Titian, Correggio, and Raphael? These painters did not imitate one another, but were as unlike as possible, and yet were all excellent. Originality is neither caprice nor affectation. It is an excellence that is always to be found in nature, but has never had a place in art before." These sentiments do honour to Northcote, and are as plainly spoken as they are just and natural. In truth, we have made much less progress in art than we imagine. We have not yet approached the grandeur and god-like dignity of the great foreign masters; we want poetic elevation; we are behind in that majestic simplicity and loftiness of invention which belong to the princes of the art. Nor do we make their direct and immediate appeals to the heart. There was a visible meaning in all they did. They painted no riddles; they made no bodies for the sake of making bodies, for they put souls into their figures: in short, they were utterly unacquainted with the art, in which too many excel, of making picturesque groups. They made no show of legs and muscles, though they had them in perfection. Sentiment prevailed over all.

He has said little, in his letters or conversations, about his way of life or of study at Rome. I have heard that, as necessity and nature united in making him economical, he lived meanly, associated with none who were likely to lead him into expenses; and as he copied for dealers or travellers a number of the favourite works of the Italian masters, he improved his skill of hand, and rather increased than diminished the sum with which he started from England. Common apartments, common clothes, and common food, sufficed for one who was too proud to ask aid from any source, and who had resolved to be independent. He formed the notion of uniting, on his return to England, portrait with historical painting; making the income arising from the first pay, and more than pay, for the time bestowed on the second. He accordingly studied both. For knowledge in likenesses, he had recourse to Titian, whom he joined Reynolds in declaring to be the supreme head of the school of portraiture. To gain an intimate acquaintance

with the works of that master, he not only visited every collection in Rome, but wandered over Italy. There were heaps, so he expressed it, of Titian's pictures at Naples, who painted them for the Farnese family. "There is that fine one," said he to Hazlitt, "which you heard me speak of,—Paul the Third and his two natural sons, or nephews as they are called. My God! what a look it has. The old man is sitting in his chair, and looking up to one of the sons, with his hands grasping the arm-chair with his long spider fingers, and seems to say, as plain as words can speak, 'You wretch, what do you want now?' while the young fellow is advancing with an humble hypocritical air." So well did he store his sketch-books, and stock his memory with notes and memorandums regarding this favourite painter, that he was enabled, near forty years afterwards, to draw from them materials for the "Life and Times of Titian."

His observations on the source of Italian inspiration in art are just and profound. It is but fair, however, to state, that, if they were made during his stay at Rome, they were neither uttered nor written till the year 1828, when other critics had given breath to similar sentiments. "As to lofty history," he observes, "our religion scarcely allows it. The Italians had no more genius for painting, nor a greater love of pictures, than we; but their church was the foster-mother of the fine arts. Being the most politic and powerful establishment in the world, they laid their hands on all that could allure and impress the minds of the people,—music, painting, architecture, ceremonies; and this produced a succession of great artists and noble works, till the churches were filled, and then they ceased. The genius of Italian art was nothing but the genius of popery; everything at Rome is like a picture—is calculated for show. I remember walking through one of the by-streets near the Vatican, where I met some procession in which the Pope was; and all at once I saw a number of the most beautiful Arabian horses curvetting and throwing out their long tails like a vision, or part of a romance. All our pageants are Bartholomew Fair exhibitions compared with what you see at Rome. And then, to see the

Pope give the benediction in St. Peter's, raising himself up, and spreading out his hands in the form of a cross, with an energy and dignity as if he was giving a blessing to the whole world." Of Edwards the painter, he related, that, on going to see the Sistine chapel with Romney, he was so little moved by the beauty of the works around, that he turned on his heel and exclaimed, "Egad, George, we're bit!"—"Northcote spoke," says Hazlitt, "of his journey to Italy, of the beauty of the climate, of the manners of the people, of the imposing effect of the Roman Catholic religion, of its favourableness to the fine arts, of the churches full of pictures, of the manner in which he passed his time, studying and looking into all the rooms in the Vatican: he had no fault to find with Italy, and no wish to leave it. Gracious and sweet was all he saw in her. As he talked, he looked as if he saw the different objects pass before him, and his eye glistened with familiar recollections. He said Raphael did not scorn to look out of himself, or to be beholden to others: he took whole figures from Massaccio to enrich his designs, because all he wanted was to advance the art and ennoble human nature. After he saw Michael Angelo he improved in freedom and breadth: all his works are an effusion of the sweetness and dignity of his own character." Having painted a number of portraits, male and female, some of which he left behind, he returned to England through Florence, to whose gallery of heads he added his portrait; and through Flanders, for the sake of studying in the collections which had the best works of Rubens and Vandyke.

When, in the year 1780, he re-appeared in London, he was welcomed warmly by Reynolds, who asked him what he thought of Michael Angelo, and what were his own views in life. Northcote replied, "For once that I went to look at Raphael, I went twice to look at Michael; and, with respect to my own views, I am resolved to take a house and commence painting portrait and history." Sir Joshua praised his taste and also his resolution; and advised him to take a house in Leicester Fields, and set up his easel beside his old master. But circumstances did not

permit him to follow counsel of which he doubted the propriety:[1] he contented himself with a more humble abode, and took lodgings at No. 2, Old Bond Street. Sir Joshua was still supreme head of the realms of portraiture; but a new competitor had come forward in historic composition. Fuseli, lately returned from his studies at Rome, had almost instantly attracted public notice by the undaunted boldness of his speculations. Had any one looked at Northcote and Fuseli through their works alone, the one too extravagant and the other too tame, no resemblance would have been traced; but when in company, and face to face, there was a close similitude of personal character. It has been remarked that little ill-blood was ever visible between them: they did not disgrace themselves by uncivil bickerings, though it is acknowledged that they looked on each other with distrust and dislike. In truth, if Northcote dreaded the crucifying ridicule of Fuseli, the Swiss respected what he called the annihilating sarcasms, more venomous than a serpent's tooth, of the Englishman: they were at all time—

"Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike;"

and eyed one another like two pitted cocks, that strut and peck and chuckle in scorn, before they leap into the air and stab with their steel heels.

Another rival, and of a more dangerous nature, made his appearance in the lists. This was Opie. The "Cornish Wonder" was opposed to the "Devonshire Prodigy." Both were of humble origin; with little of what the world calls education; both came, too, from the great academy of nature: for assuredly the influence of studios, or galleries of works of art, had no share in preparing them for the contest. Reynolds was privately in favour of Northcote;

[1] He appears to have returned for a short time to Plymouth, where he made a little more money by taking portraits; but he came back to London, and established himself in Bond Street in 1781. His fame was greatly increased by his sojourn in Italy, and he now began contributing regularly to the Royal Academy. In this year, 1781, we find two portraits by him of "Naval Officers." He had been made while abroad a member of the Academies of Rome, Florence, and Crotona.—Ed.

Wolcot, the satiric rhymer, was publicly in favour of Opie: the former sought to do his pupil service by all those nameless and indescribable ways of intimating preference without expressing it; while the latter, a bold, dauntless, and shameless person, wrote verses and paragraphs in favour of Opie, which were blown far and wide by the hot breath of the public press. Nature, however, took the matter into her own hands, and raised the one soonest to distinction whom she had inspired most. Opie soon found himself invested with what he called a "terrific popularity:" he felt that his right hand had not acquired sufficient skill, nor his mind that sense of the delicate and the beautiful, which would enable him to keep the place to which he had been borne as on wings, and without his own consent. Northcote looked on all this in his own quiet, cool way, and foretold the descent of the popular idol from its pedestal. "In a very little space of time," said he, "that capricious public, who had so violently admired and employed Opie when he first appeared and was a novelty among them, and was in reality only the embryo of a painter, after he *had* proved himself to be a real artist, left him with disgust, because he was a novelty no longer." Though in a great measure pitted against each other, Northcote and Opie were, to all appearance, friends. "I wish you had known Opie," the former observed to Hazlitt: "he was a very original-minded man: I do not say that he was always right, but he put your thoughts into a new track, which was worth following."

After his return from Rome, Northcote visited his family in Devonport, and painted the portraits of all who were attracted by that increase of fame which study abroad brings. "I took," said Mr. Rosdew of Plymouth, "my friend, Mr. Bulteel of Fleet, to see his works, observing to him, as we went, that the painter was not above the influence of flattery. We went through his father's little shop, and up a small winding staircase. At the top were two doors leading to two rooms, in each of which were pictures. That on the right hand contained a large picture, a portrait of a very worthy but a very severe stern man; and so much of the character was in the face, that my companion, when he saw

it, said, 'Cover that picture up, or I can't come in; he is going to say a stern thing to me.' Northcote bowed, and seemed so grateful, that he looked as if he would have worshipped the speaker." He was at all times very accessible to flattery; and though he would not have allowed it to be laid on, as the poet says, with a trowel, he was not averse to a thick varnishing Soon after his establishment in London, and when his pictures began to be talked of, a friend from Plymouth visited the artist, praised his works, and was going away.—"When shall we see you here again?" inquired the painter.—"When you are Sir James Northcote," replied the Devonian.—"Oh, that will never be," said the artist.—"Then there will be more want of discernment than of merit, sir," said his flatterer. Upon this one present exclaimed, "You would not swallow that, would you?"—"Swallow!" said the painter; "why not? I will swallow anything that is sweet and pleasing." The bitter things which dropped like aquafortis from his tongue, in after-years, made his early weaknesses remembered.

I have heard men of taste claim for Northcote the merit of being the founder of the school of historical painting in England: they were of Devon; and might desire to honour their countryman, without being aware of wronging Reynolds, or of the claims of West and Barry. Northcote was only known as the exhibitor of an indifferent portrait or two, when those distinguished men had produced some of their highest historical pictures. In 1783 he sent to the Exhibition three pictures, part portrait and part fanciful. One was "Beggars with Dancing Dogs;" a second was "Hobinella," from Gay's "Shepherd's Week;" and a third was "The Village Doctress:" and in 1784 he exhibited the picture of "Captain Englefield with eleven of his crew saving themselves in the pinnace from the wreck of the Centaur, of 74 guns, lost September, 1782." But admitting these to be of the historical rank, we must not forget that "The Death of Wolfe," by West, and the "Adam and Eve," by Barry, had been painted ten years before. Northcote, nevertheless, ranks with the fathers of historical painting. His conception was usually just, his

meaning plain; nor was there an utter absence of poetic dignity in any of his works: he looked on nature with no vulgar eye, and desired to confine her luxuriance within the limits of science and sense. The shipwreck of Captain Englefield was very favourably received: the twelve portraits in the picture were considered well drawn, and harmoniously combined in one clear and intelligible action. New sitters were attracted; and the way to the painter's door began to be encumbered with carriages and servants holding saddle-horses, much in the manner which he himself relates of Opie. He had reaped the crop of portraiture which his native country presented, and now established himself in Clifford Street, New Bond Street, where he commenced housekeeping, in a small way, and formed something resembling a studio and gallery.

Though money poured in and fame increased, the soul of the painter failed to expand with his fortune. He was, in truth, of a nature narrow and contracted. He maintained his early sharp system of economy, kept up the same simplicity of dress, and the same frugality of table. Neither did Northcote bate one jot of his sarcastic remarks and bitter sayings; not only did he fling the barbed and sometimes poisoned darts of his speech against men in high places, but he spared not the brethren of the palette, or, if he spared any, it was only Sir Joshua. He now began, too, to pen criticisms in the newspapers, and give accounts of pictures and picture-dealers: moreover, he was more than suspected of writing rhymes. Some of his portraits having been sharply handled by the critics, he conceived a dislike to all the race who live by disposing of their opinions: he accused them of ignorance,—of knowing nothing of Michael Angelo or the grand style,—and averred that there was something so spiritual, so mystical or profound, in works of art, that no one could comprehend them save those who had studied in the schools and travelled to Rome. To Reynolds, who sometimes visited him, these sentiments were not unwelcome; but the image of frugality which his household presented was more pleasing to the President than the sight of the paintings: he shrugged his shoulders, hinted and murmured, and finally accused him of

worshipping the florid style of colouring, and with deficiency in the harmony of light and shade.

He sent to the Exhibition of the year 1785 eight pictures, of which five were portraits, and three works of fancy: the portraits are without names; the others are, "The Charity," "The Fruit Girl," and "The Visit to the Grandmother."[1] These were so well received that Northcote made a step into history, and, in the year 1786, painted his "King Edward V. and his Brother, Richard Duke of York, murdered in the Tower, by order of Richard III.;" "The Death of Prince Leopold of Brunswick;" and "The Loss of the Halsewell East Indiaman." The first of these was praised by the critics, and beautifully copied by the graver; and the fame of Northcote was spread over the land. He was already favourably known by the "Shipwreck of Captain Englefield," and "The Village Doctress," both of which had been engraved; but this was a work of a higher quality; the characters were dead and gone, and he had to imagine faces, and endow them with sentiment in the spirit of history. That he has accomplished this has never been questioned, though I have heard both the proportions of the figures and the style of colouring spoken of as much inferior to the sentiment and feeling of the scene. There is, in truth, hardly a picture of his in which the proportions are harmonious, or the drawing correct: in this fine painting, however, the exquisite innocence and grace of the children triumph over all defects. The Royal Academy now admitted him to the honours of Associate; nor among the lists of his works is there any proof that he smoothed the way to preferment by painting portraits of the already honoured brethren. He was, indeed, no flatterer, nor swimmer with the stream; to praise him was not always the surest way of pleasing

[1] All these are, as Redgrave calls them, "milk-and-water illustrations of the lesser moralities." Though characterless and somewhat vulgar in style, they pleased the taste of the time, and the engravings of them became very popular. Still more popularity did he acquire by his "Young Princes murdered in the Tower," a picture which raised him to the rank he desired of historic painter, though, in truth, it is only painted in a common-place historic genre style.—Ed.

him; and no one ever succeeded who tried contradiction.

This has been called the golden age of historical painting in England: the King employed West, and Boydell retained all other members of the Academy who had any reputation in poetic composition. The aim of that generous patron of the fine arts was to establish a market all over the world for engravings from the best paintings of the English masters, and so diffuse at one and the same time a knowledge of our history, our poetry, and our fine arts, among all nations. The scheme was a magnificent one, and it prospered for a time. To the Shakspeare Gallery Northcote contributed his "Murder of the Royal Children," and was then desired by Boydell, with a Londoner's feelings, to try his hand on the "Death of Wat Tyler." The painter thus relates the history of this noble picture:—"I said that I could make nothing of it; but as soon as Boydell was gone, and I was left to myself, the whole then seemed to unfold itself naturally. I never could study the rules of composition, or make sketches and drawings beforehand: in this, probably running into the opposite error to that of the modern Italian painters, whom Fuseli reproaches with spending their whole lives in preparation,—I must begin at once, or I can do nothing. When I set about the 'Wat Tyler,' I was frightened at it; it was the largest work I had ever undertaken: there were to be horses, and armour, and buildings, and several groups in it: when I looked at it, the canvas seemed ready to fall on me. But I had committed myself, and could not escape; disgrace was behind me, and every step I made in advance was so much positively gained. If I had stayed to make a number of designs, and try different experiments, I never should have had the courage to go on." These are the confessions of a man who seems to have had little imaginative power: who saw his subject by a leg and a head at a time, and wanted that pictorial splendour of fancy which places the scene which he longs to embody before his mind's eye as clearly as a portrait taker places a sitter. Northcote had to grope his way more than a poetic artist ought; and though he seized, sometimes,

noble things in the dark, what he produced was more the result of incessant labour than of a happy exertion of fancy and feeling. This was the cause of a certain air of stiffness, and want of natural ease, which marked many of his figures: they were not made at once, and seemed to usurp the canvas by force, rather than hold it as their inheritance.

The "Wat Tyler," the largest, if not the happiest effort of the painter, met with a very gracious reception from the world. The story of the heroic mayor and the bold insurgent is told with great simplicity and truth. Tyler, stunned by a stroke of Walworth's mace, is dropping from his horse; the poniard of a citizen is ready to make all secure; the youthful king gazes on the scene with a touch of boyish astonishment, while the rebels bend their bows and advance their spears to avenge the death of their leader. The colouring is rich, the light and shade happy: the work fills the imagination, and realizes history. The citizens, one and all, applauded the performance: the terrors which hemmed the artist around whilst he painted were dispelled by the voice of general approbation. "Now, Northcote will go home," said Fuseli, "put an extra piece of coal on his fire, and be almost tempted to draw the cork of his only pint of wine, when he hears such praise." In the "Death of Wat Tyler," as well as in compositions later and earlier, Northcote imagined himself imitating Titian and other Italian masters; but, in truth, he imitated, perhaps unconsciously, his master, Reynolds. He could only see what was really before him. The Titians which he saw at Venice, and Naples, and Rome, did not accompany him out of Italy: all, save the general impression they made, faded from his recollection; whereas Sir Joshua's labours were visible every day. Such pleasant delusions are not uncommon in the world. Rowe imagined that he imitated Shakspeare.

It was the fortune of Northcote to live long in something like a state of opposition to Opie.[1] They were both

[1] Messrs. Redgrave, who have given a long and amusing account of Northcote in "The Century of English Painters," do not think that he

engaged in historical pictures, by the same adventurous alderman, and acquitted themselves in a way which, with many, left their merits in the balance. Opie had more force and more life; but then he wanted a certain air of academic elegance, which Northcote bestowed on all his compositions: the first was sometimes vulgar, and a want of elevation and purity was discernible in all he did; the latter had little natural fire, but he had a fine sense of what history required. The dignity of Raphael had not been exhibited to him in vain. In after life, when Opie had ceased to be in any one's way, Northcote could recall, without any bitterness, their days of rivalry. "Opie," said he to Hazlitt, "was a man of sense and observation: he paid me the compliment of saying, that we would have been the best of friends in the world if we had not been rivals. I think he had more of this feeling than I had; perhaps, because I had most vanity. We sometimes got into foolish altercations. I recollect once, in particular, at a banker's in the city, we took up the whole of dinner-time with a ridiculous controversy about Milton and Shakspeare. I am sure neither of us had the least notion which was right; and when I was heartily ashamed of it, a foolish citizen added to my confusion by saying, 'Lord!

was ever otherwise than friendly with Opie, though the strong language in which he was wont to express his sentiments made some people imagine that he regarded his rival with furious hatred. Most of his outrageous speeches were merely said to astonish his listeners, and were often simply humorous exaggerations, as when he describes his feelings on seeing Opie's "Murder of Rizzio," a subject which he also was painting at the same time. On returning to his own work, he says, "The ghost of that picture stood between me and my blank canvas—I could see nothing but the murderers of Rizzio. I felt I could have rejoiced if they had seized the painter and murdered him instead. Yes, I could! This dwelt upon my fancy until I laughed at the conceit; for, thought I, then there had been a meddling fiddler and a rival painter despatched at the same expense. . . . . To attempt anything so original, so gloriously fine, I might as well have set about creating another world." All this, it is evident, was mere fun, and was said probably to Opie himself, who would have been complimented by the effect his "*picter*," as Northcote calls it, produced. On Opie's death he was sincerely affected, and wrote a very eulogistic account of him in "The Artist," though, in his harsh talk, he professed it to be a relief that such a "stumbling-block" was removed out of his way.—Ed.

what would I give to hear two such men as you talk every day!'" On another occasion, when on his way to Devonport, Opie parted with him where the road branches off for Cornwall. He said to those who were on the coach with him, "That is Opie the painter."—"Is it, indeed!" they all cried, and upbraided Northcote for not informing them sooner. Upon this he contrived, by way of experiment, to try the influence of his own name; but his fame had not reached those enlightened "Outsides," and the painter confessed he felt mortified.

The fame which he acquired by the "Wat Tyler" was supported by his pictures of the "Burial of the Murdered Princes in the Tower," and the "Arthur and Hubert." The former of these compositions is much more picturesque than natural: the murderers, accompanied by torch-bearers, are represented carrying the naked children down a steep and difficult stair; and instead of conveying them the easiest and readiest way, they have laid them upon long cloths, and are lowering them into the dungeon, with an excess of trouble, which shows them to have been sad dolts in the way of their business. All this, however, was done in order to give the painter an opportunity of showing how well he could manage his colours: the deadly white of the naked bodies contrasts with the cloths on which they are lowered, and the torch sheds a dismal glare down the steps of the dungeon, and on the faces of the murderers. One is struck with the unnatural action, and "double, double toil and trouble" sort of character of the composition. The "Hubert and Arthur" cannot be charged with the fault of extravagance: it is thoughtful and touching, and tells its story with great simplicity and clearness. These works had their influence: on the 13th of February, 1787, Northcote was made a member of the Academy, and was welcomed to his station by the hand of the President, his master and friend.

He took his seat in the Academy, but he seldom mixed in any of the sharp debates which too frequently happened. Those who are most happy with the pencil are seldom so well gifted in the matter of oratory as their inferior brethren; and as Reynolds in his studio was no encourager

of talking, but pronounced it the mark of a second-rate mind, Northcote, perhaps, felt that he was not quite so secure of fame, in art, as to risk it by long speeches. He had no great liking to the Royal Academy from the moment of his admission: of the members, individually, he expresses himself, in his conversations, with moderation, and sometimes kindness; but of the body corporate he writes with unmitigated bitterness. What was the source of all this hatred? He obtained admission himself as soon as his merits were made public; not a little, it is said, to the mortification of Fuseli, who thought his own genius overlooked; and, as he offered himself for no office, he could not brood in secret over the refusal of a situation for which he had not asked. His dislike, probably, arose from his own inability to make a figure in the public meetings or in the councils, and from the notice which the titled and the opulent took of mere portrait painters, who, considerable as Northcote allowed their merits to be, approached not the dignity which he attached to the school of history and poetry. In those times, a skilful face-painter was the companion of princes and dukes; while he who followed the grand style was thankful when a citizen invited him to his table. I know not what company, save that of his brethren, Northcote in those days kept: that he spoke little in the Academy we have his own assurance. "I remember," said he, "when Sir Joshua wished to propose a monument to Dr. Johnson in St. Paul's, that West got up, and said, the King, he knew, was averse to anything of the kind, for he had been proposing a similar monument in Westminster Abbey for a man of the greatest genius and celebrity,—one whose works were in all the cabinets of the curious throughout Europe,—one whose name they would all hear with the greatest respect,—and then it came out, after a long preamble, that he meant Woollett, who had engraved his 'Death of Wolfe.' I was provoked, and could not help exclaiming, 'My God! do you put Woollett on a footing with such a man as Dr. Johnson, one of the greatest philosophers and moralists that ever lived? We can have a thousand engravers at any time.' There was such a

burst of laughter at this:—Dance, a grave, gentlemanly man, laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks; and Farington used afterwards to say to me, 'Why don't you speak in the Academy; and begin with, My God! as you did when you discomfited West?'"

It is said Northcote felt, like Reynolds, that historical subjects cost him much study, and that the fame which they brought could scarcely be considered as a compensation for the outlay of labour, and the sitters for portraits of which they deprived him. It is very probable, however, that his poetic pictures brought faces to his easel when the time came that poetic pictures by Northcote were no longer wanted,—and, fortunately or unfortunately, that time was not far off. The speculations of Boydell were in a great measure alien to the feeling of the country. In Britain, the love of art is not a common passion: every day we see the merest daubers patronised by the highest of the land; and men unworthy of preparing sculptors' modelling clay employed to make the statues of heroes and legislators. The public runs after whatever is strange or new; and whether it be a so-called genius, or merely some far-fetched oddity, the gaping wonder of the multitude lasts but for a season, and is ever ready to welcome new entertainers. "The Shakspeare Gallery speculation," says one of Northcote's biographers, "proved an entire failure; and the venerable Boydell, in his patriotic endeavour to still further advance the interest of the arts of his country, made a wreck of his fortune. The *éclat* which certain painters obtained, during the short season of popularity which the Shakspeare Gallery experienced, began also to decline; and it must be confessed that Northcote, and some others, seem to have lost much of their wonted energy from this unfortunate epoch. It is true that they still continued to paint, and laboured long and steadily: but the fire that was kindled on the establishing of this national competition for fame soon burnt with less ardour; and the flame by degrees could scarcely warm the genius that gave it birth." Two stimulants expired with this speculation—the competition with Opie, and the money which those historical paintings brought in. The genius

of Northcote required to be animated by opposition, and soothed in its hours of toil with the chink of gold; the sound of which, when paid down, was sweet in the artist's ears as the music of Apollo's lute. Had he valued wealth merely as the stepping-stone to independence, comfort, and elegance, his feeling would have been rational and wise; but he was one of those whom the poet reproaches with such love of money as a tame jackdaw has for silver spoons—to hide it rather than to use it. He loved to converse with such people as could instruct him in the art of laying out his gains,—men who frequented the public places, where wealth waits on him who, between guessing and gambling, stumbles darkly upon Fortune.

As the failure of the Shakspeare Gallery involved only the disciples of the grand style, the portrait painters, in general, continued to flourish. Northcote joined the band, at that time as numerous nearly as now, and solicited public favour for a variety of portraits, most of which he sent to the Academy Exhibition. Of those works I can give but an imperfect account. I have heard good judges say, that they showed a clear perception of character, with some skill in light and shade, but were deficient in that deep clear elegance of colour which gives to canvas the hue of nature, were formal of posture, and wanted the easy attitudes of life. It has been remarked, that even his happiest designs look better from the hand of the graver than from his own. Nothing can mark more strongly than this the deficiency of his colouring, and the superiority of his conceptions. Among the works of this period I may particularize his "Grecian Girl;" "The Dominican Friar;" and "Two Sketches of Characters from Shakspeare." The latter were preparations, I have heard, for larger paintings, commissioned in the golden days of Boydell.

In 1791, Northcote removed from Clifford Street to 39, Argyll Street—a house small but commodious. He was now in the forty-fourth year of his age, in the full enjoyment of health, with not a little money in the funds, and a fame on the rise rather than the decrease; with fair employment as a portrait painter, and now and then a

small commission in the fancy or historic way. With the brethren of the easel, his sarcastic sayings and shrewd replies made him respected: a certain dislike which he had picked up or imbibed in matters of existing politics obtained him the notice of the Prince of Wales, and the countenance of some of the Whig leaders; and it was supposed that he looked forward, and not without reason, to an accession of commissions on the death of Reynolds.

The time of Sir Joshua's removal came, but I have not heard that the fortune of his pupil was bettered. In truth, men of greater skill in the popular art of portraiture had arisen, and Northcote saw with concern that public favour flowed to those who could flatter beauty with richer colours than his own. The kindness, too, of Reynolds had been useful to him; but death had extinguished that for ever, and he had now solely to depend upon his own skill and address. The "Devonshire Prodigy" was an indifferent courtier: he was one of those unpliable persons

"Who would not flatter Neptune for his trident."

Moreover, he had other drawbacks in the way to success as a portrait painter. In the economy of his household he was sordid, and would not waste his money on silken accommodations for soft and fastidious customers. His sitting-room was ill-furnished, ill-arranged, and ill-swept; and when a lady had overcome all her nicer sensations respecting the studio, she could not be sure that the occupier of the den might not treat her to some of his cynical sallies, and thus rob her face of much of that natural sweetness so essential in female portraiture. That many ladies, and not of low rank, penetrated into his studio, this narrative may yet show; for no one could be more polite, or gracefully complaisant, or flatteringly agreeable than our painter; but then it was seldom his pleasure to be in that cloudless mood.

It had been for some time whispered that Northcote was busied on a series of pictures, which, uniting the poetry with the realities of life, would reconcile academic elegance and scientific grace to the varied excellence and unregulated

loveliness of nature. When, in 1796, those pictures made their appearance in the Exhibition of the Academy, it was found that the painter had an aim even beyond this—that it was his ambition to read a great moral lesson to his country. He delineated two young women, of humble condition, clever and charming, commencing their careers in the world at the same time, and in the same place: one of them he endowed with natural modesty and love of truth and virtue, and on the other he bestowed those dangerous passions which hurry beauty to disgrace and ruin. There were ten pictures in all; and the names of these will sufficiently indicate the line of story, and the moral the artist desired to bring out. 1. "The Modest Girl and the Wanton, fellow-servants in a gentleman's house." 2. "The Wanton Revelling with her Companions." 3. "Good advice given to both by an old Servant." 4. "The Wanton in her bed-chamber." 5. "The Modest Girl in her bed-chamber." 6. "The Wanton turned out of doors for misconduct." 7. "The Modest Girl rejects the illicit addresses of her Master." 8. "The Wanton, dying in poverty and disease, visited by the Modest Girl." 9. "The Modest Girl receives the honourable addresses of her Master." 10. "The Modest Girl, married to her Master, is led to her coach; while the Wanton, dead in misery, is laid in her grave." The idea (taken of course from Richardson's Pamela) was fine, the aim good, and nothing was wanting but dramatic skill and genius to confer variety of character, and dip the whole in those splendid hues which are to painting what nervous words are to poetry. Of all who looked upon those compositions, the painter himself was the only one who thought he had succeeded. The beauty of Northcote's "Modest Girl" seemed as little calculated to lead her to distinction, as the loveliness of his "Wanton" was to lure the seducer and conduct her to ruin. The nature of the subject, as well as the way in which it was handled, recalled Hogarth's "Marriage-à-la-Mode" to the memories of men; and it was little to the pleasure of Sir Joshua's pupil, and the admirer of Michael Angelo, to be told that a painter, who had made nature alone his academy, had

far excelled him in all that can lend interest to such compositions.

From this time it was observed that he never mentioned Hogarth without a sneer. In one of his conversations with Hazlitt, he said, "Hogarth moulded little figures, and placed them to see how the lights fell, and how the drapery came in—which gave a certain look of reality and relief; but this was not enough to give breadth or grace, and his figures look like puppets after all, or like dolls dressed up. Who would compare any of those little deformed caricatures of men and women to the figure of St. Paul preaching at Athens? What we justly admire and emulate is that which raises human nature, not that which degrades and holds it up to scorn. St. Giles's is not the only school of art; it is nature to be sure, but we must select nature. Ask the meanest person in the gallery at a play-house which he likes best, the tragedy or the farce; he will tell you without hesitation—the tragedy, and will prefer Mrs. Siddons to the most exquisite buffoon." This is an absurd criticism on Hogarth: that eminent man knew the nature of his undertaking better than to lavish on the children of sin and wickedness the shapes and hues of angels: he is a great moral satirist, and holds up to contempt the persons as well as the minds of those whom he desires to lash. Satiric painting and historic painting differ as much in their means and materials, as Homer's Iliad differs from Hudibras. No one knew this better than Northcote himself; and it is one of his unamiable traits, that he nevertheless continually examined the works of Hogarth in comparison with those of Raphael and Reynolds, and condemned him because he had succeeded in spite of his disregard of academic grace and scientific unity. Mere elegance of form is a less alluring thing than most artists are willing to admit; it is in painting as it is in life—the finest form is not always the most fascinating. A woman, whose shape and countenance are not at all according to the accepted principles of beauty, will charm men more by the force of sentiment alone, than others do on whom physical perfections have descended in a shower. Now and then, in the writings of

Northcote, he speaks favourably of the genius of Hogarth; but he seems unwilling to say in what way it is manifested. He condemns his compositions, one and all, as exhibitions of puppets; declares he has no more right to be named as a painter than Fielding has; and strikes him out of the roll of artists, by saying that Reynolds was born immediately before the death of Kneller, "thus perpetuating the hereditary descent of the art."[1]

Having failed in his attempt in the moral line, he returned to portraiture and to historic composition, as to studies from which he had been against his will withheld. Of mere portraiture he almost always spoke in a tone nearly allied to contempt; but then he imagined that Northcote's portraits were something better than likenesses; he regarded *them* as demi-historical at least. When he painted his own head, which he did often, he put on a splendid cap of green velvet; assumed a sort of Titian-like air; regarded himself complacently in the glass, and strove hard to make his labours on the canvas rival, or rather surpass, the shadow before him. While engaged on a head of himself, he entered into conversation with Hazlitt concerning the great litigated point of history and portrait. "Portrait," said he, "often runs into history, and history into portrait, without our knowing it. Expression is common to both, and that is the chief difficulty. The greatest history painters have always been able portrait painters. How should a man paint a thing in motion, if he cannot paint it still? But the great point is to catch the prevailing look and character; if you are master of this, you can make almost what use of it you please. If a portrait has force, it will do for history; and if history is well painted, it will do for portrait. This is what gave dignity to Sir Joshua; his portraits have always that determined air and character, that you know what to think of them as if you

[1] "Northcote," says Leslie, "who was perhaps the last of that class of critics who considered Hogarth a vulgar painter, tried an imitation of him. He painted a series of pictures (the histories of two housemaids), founded on the 'Industrious and Idle Apprentices,' and partly on 'Pamela.' There could not be a more lamentable failure; and Northcote never forgave Hogarth."—ED.

had seen them engaged in the most decided action. Many of the groups of Raphael in the Vatican are only collections of fine portraits. West, Barry, and others, pretended to despise portrait, because they could not do it, and it would only expose their want of truth and nature. If you can give the *look*, you need not fear painting history."

His deliberate judgments in art are seldom right, while his casual remarks have often great merit. A man may be a fine portrait painter, without possessing those high qualities of imagination essential to a painter of history. A sitter brings his features and his expression with him, and the limner has only to transfer them to his canvas, with such modifications as his taste may suggest: this is no difficult exploit. We see men on all sides flourishing, like the green bay tree, in the manufacture of heads, who can no more carry them into the performance of noble actions, where one sentiment rules the whole as the wind sways the tree-tops, than they could square a circle, or invent the perpetual motion. It is, besides, seldom, indeed, in life, that we can find heads so fine in form, and so dignified in expression, as historical painting requires. Few, certainly, of the portraits painted by Northcote himself would be accepted by the world as substitutes for heroes.

Of the historical pictures which he painted along with his portraits, I shall render no very detailed account. They were neither very numerous nor remarkable, whether for dignity of conception or natural elegance of colour. "The Landing of the Prince of Orange at Torbay" is, as a composition, cold, correct, and lifeless: it was, however, well enough received: the portraits of the chief leaders of the enterprise were inserted; but there was a bustle without dignity, and a sort of stir as if galvanism had set the dead into motion. "The Leopards" also pleased many. He prided himself justly on his beasts and birds: he could deal better with physical than with mental power. "Jacob blessing the Sons of Joseph" is a quiet, serene picture: the old man seems not to feel the worth of what he gives; and the youths receive the benediction with a calmness which some critics mistook for indifference. The "St. Francis" was a portrait, and worthy of the painter. "The

Mother's Prayer" was reposing and graceful; so was "The Girl reading;" nor should the picture of "Two Monkeys" be forgotten: there was skill in the grouping, and much nature in the character of these natives of the desert. The work, however, which made the most favourable impression on the public mind, was "Argyll visited, while asleep in prison, by his chief Enemy." There is an air of tranquillity and innocence about the slumbering nobleman, and of awe, not unmingled with remorse, about his visitor, exceedingly well portrayed. "When I was doing," said Northcote, "the figures of Argyll in prison, and of his enemy who comes and finds him asleep, I had a great difficulty to encounter in conveying the expression of the last; indeed, I did it from myself: I wanted to give a look of mingled remorse and admiration, and when I found that others saw this look in the sketch I had made, I left off. By going on, I might lose it again. There is a point of felicity, which, whether you fall short of, or have gone beyond it, can only be determined by the effect on the unprejudiced observer. You cannot be always with your picture, to explain it to others; it must be left to speak for itself. Those who stand before their pictures, and make fine speeches about them, do themselves a world of harm: a painter should cut out his tongue, if he wishes to succeed." There are few of the pictures of Northcote that are not clear in conception, and intelligible in story.

In the race of portraiture he was outstripped by some who began to run long after he started; and it was with but little philosophy that he witnessed their fortune. Against Lawrence he particularly directed the shafts of his sarcasm: he had opposed his admission to the Academy, on the just and proper grounds that he had not reached the age contemplated by the rules; and when the patronage of the King forced him in, he resented the intrusion as an attack upon the independence of the body. All this might be right; but the continuance of his resentment against the rival artist must, I am afraid, be set down to that unamiable disposition which sickens at other men's success. He always denied that Lawrence had any genius:

his men's heads, he said, were effeminate, and his women's licentious; his style of drawing, and his mode of colouring, equally displeased him: in fact, he was resolved not to acknowledge excellence which he could not but feel. With Fuseli his contests were sharp and frequent; and though they mutually dreaded each other, they never hesitated to plunge into the strife of wit, more to the amusement of their brethren than their own credit. These two men were reckoned the wits of the Academy; but their sallies were rather those of rough, ready-witted boors, than of polished gentlemen: there were no delicate touches on sensitive places; all was, on both sides, coarse vigour and extravagant caricature.

From 1800, for the space of a dozen years, Northcote exhibited some sixty out of the numberless portraits which he painted. Of these, very few were of men of genius: he was sparing of his time and colours upon talent, for that is generally too poor to be a good paymaster. If we except the portrait of himself,—a delineation which he liked,—the head of Godwin seems the only one to which true talent can lay claim. To the author of "Caleb Williams" the painter appears to have been much attached; and, if other proof were wanting than the outlay of canvas, colour, and time, all of which Northcote considered, it may be found in his Conversations. "It is extraordinary," said he, on one occasion, "how particular the world sometimes are, and what prejudices they take up against people. There is Godwin, who is a very good man: yet, when I wished to introduce him at the house of a lady who lives in a round of society, and has a strong tinge of the blue stocking, she would not hear of it: the sound of the name seemed to terrify her: it was his writings she was afraid of: he is a profligate only in theory." The lady had daughters, and was afraid they might think of carrying into practice some of the philosophical views about matrimony, and so forth, contained in Godwin's extraordinary history of Mary Wolstonecroft. Hazlitt, to whom the painter's words were addressed, answered, "He has written against matrimony, and has been twice married; he has scouted all the common-place

duties, and yet is a good husband and a kind father. He is a strange composition of contrary qualities. He is a cold formalist, and full of ardour and enthusiasm of mind; dealing in magnificent projects and petty cavils; naturally dull, but brilliant by dint of study; pedantic and playful; a dry logician, and a writer of romances." The personal virtue of Mr. Godwin's life has, for half a century at least, I believe, been as little liable to question, as the strength of his genius, or the pernicious tendency of his early doctrines, moral and political.

Though the love of historic painting was well nigh extinct in the land, Northcote was slow, or unwilling, to abandon a line of study which had brought him into fame. As he considered those pictures which he exhibited to be the best, I shall proceed to notice them in the order in which they made their appearance:—1. The Cradle Hymn. 2. A Girl in a Show of Animals. 3. A Bacchante. 4. A Lady passing the Alps. 5. Vulture and Snake. 6. Christ the Good Shepherd. 7. Prospero, Miranda, and Caliban. 8. Tiger Hunting. 9. Buck Hunting. 10. A Girl going to Market. 11. The Angels appearing to the Shepherds. 12. Romulus and Remus. 13. Death of the Earl of Argyll. 14. The Disobedient Prophet of Judah slain by a Lion. 15. Lion Hunting. 16. Joseph and his Brethren. Of these, some are natural and vigorous; some forced and exaggerated; but all are marked by a simplicity of conception, and an elevation of thought, which seldom forsook him in his compositions. The picture of "The Vulture and Snake" has been commended by all critics, and admired by all spectators. The former seems uttering that sharp, shrill cry, which announces his love of carnage; and the latter raises his slim and speckled neck, and prepares for resistance. The picture of "Prospero and Miranda" is from that fine scene in the Tempest, where the father relates to the daughter the cause of his exile. Miranda is supposed to be saying,—

> —— "You have often
> Begun to tell me what I am; but stopp'd
> And left me to a bootless inquisition;
> Concluding, *Stay, not yet.*"

Had something of the wildness of Fuseli mingled with the composure of Northcote, we might perhaps have had in him a great painter. As it is, one finds in almost all his historical compositions little of that vital fire, without which the fairest forms are but clods of the valley, and the most gorgeous draperies a waste of colour. He knew—no one knew better—what was necessary to be done; but his imagination was of a low order, and even his skill of hand none of the best. His Scripture pieces are generally heavy and uninspired. "Christ the Good Shepherd" has little of the divinity. "The Disobedient Prophet" is destroyed by the lion, without exciting our feelings; and "Joseph and his Brethren" recalls, to the disadvantage of the artist, the simple pathos of the Scriptures.

Northcote in the year 1813 made his appearance as a regular biographer. He had been long known as a writer of little essays on art; critiques on pictures; and occasional sets of verses. His articles on Originality in painting, on Imitators and Collectors, and on Disappointed genius, had excited but moderate interest among artists; nor had his character of Opie, or his original sketch of Reynolds, raised high expectations; while his best verses were obviously inspired, when

> "The Muses on their racks
> Scream like the winding of ten thousand jacks."

Neither in verse, nor in prose had he made much impression on any one. In the former he was deficient in elevation and fluency, and in the latter his style was dry and hard, without unsolicited happiness of expression, or originality of sentiment. The announcement, therefore, of a formal "Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds," was but coldly received in London; though, in the provinces, the bookseller's advertisement that it contained original anecdotes of the great painter's illustrious contemporaries, and was written by the ingenious James Northcote, his pupil and friend, had some influence.

When this "Life" came out, it was quickly followed by a rumour, which has not yet ceased, that Northcote was not the real author, but had employed a more skilful hand than

his own. The Memoir, however, bears on every page the plainest marks of his own hand. That some one aided him, to clear a passage from obscurity, or give point to an anecdote, may be allowed, without damage to his reputation: he has himself informed us, that he employed a certain Mr. Laird, who lived in Peterborough Court, Fleet Street, to see it through the press; and this may have occasioned the rumour. The book was not received with much applause. The narrative is, on the whole, tedious and weak; nor does it often make amends for general languor, by brilliant detached passages, which, like wells in the desert, induce us, as we drink, to forget the arid path over which we travelled.

Even Northcote's love of Sir Joshua may be questioned. Now and then an ill-concealed dislike flashes through his praise; and it is certain that the whole "Life" leaves the impression of a schemer. He would, however, in private conversation, allow no one to speak sharply of Reynolds but himself; and whenever he heard any one criticize his paintings with a leaning to the rigorous, he instantly interposed. On one occasion he declared that, in painting, Michael Angelo and Raphael were beasts compared to Sir Joshua. It was natural that he should support the fame of his master; in allowing any one to lower him, he felt he was permitting a blow to be given to the very keystone of the arch of British art. Though I cannot rank the Memoir of Reynolds high as a literary composition, nor allow it much merit for the original vigour or accuracy of its sentiments, it is, nevertheless, valuable as a record of sayings which would otherwise have perished, and of anecdotes which might have missed a chronicler. That Northcote himself imagined he had written something wondrous, is well known.

What we chiefly miss in this work is that brief and lucid summary of character in which Johnson excelled. We are left to gather, from the surface of six hundred pages, Sir Joshua's merits as an artist, and his manners as a man. One learns more, in fact, about the President from Northcote's Conversations than from his Memoir. He opened his heart when he had not a pen in his hand. "Sir Joshua,"

he remarked to Hazlitt, "was not spoiled by flattery, and yet he had as much of it as anybody need have. He was looking out to see what the world thought of him, or thinking what figure he should make by the side of Correggio or Vandyke, not pluming himself on being a better painter than some one in the next street, or surprised that the people at his own table should speak in praise of his pictures." Of his portraits he thus expressed himself:—"If I was to compare Reynolds with Vandyke and Titian, I should say that Vandyke's portraits are like pictures—very perfect ones, no doubt; Sir Joshua's like the reflection in a looking-glass; and Titian's like the real people. There is an atmosphere of light and shade about Sir Joshua's, which neither of the others have in the same degree, together with a vagueness which gives them a visionary and romantic character, and makes them seem like dreams or vivid recollections of persons we have seen. I never could mistake Vandyke's for anything but pictures, and I got up to them to examine them as such: when I see a fine Sir Joshua, I can neither suppose it to be a mere picture, nor a man; and I almost involuntarily turn back to ascertain that it is not some one behind me reflected in the glass." When Hazlitt observed, that he thought Reynolds had more resemblance to Rembrandt than to either Titian or Vandyke, as he enveloped objects in the same brilliant haze of a previous mental conception,—"Yes," he said; "but though Sir Joshua borrowed a great deal, he drew largely from himself; or, rather, it was a strong and peculiar feeling of nature working in him, and forcing its way out in spite of all impediments, and that made whatever he touched his own. In spite of his deficiency in drawing, and his want of academic rules and a proper education, you see this breaking out like the devil in all his works: it is this that has stamped him. There is a charm in his portraits—a mingled softness and force, a grasping at the end, with nothing harsh or unpleasant in the means—that you will find nowhere else. He may go out of fashion for a time; but you must come back to him again, while a thousand imitators and academic triflers are forgotten. This proves him to have been a real genius."

In conversation Northcote spoke clearly, concisely, and fluently. In writing he paused and pondered, doled out dull words, and was neither eloquent nor easy.

As the Memoir was the fruit of his leisure hours, his pencil had continued its labours: the number of his sitters was yet considerable, and the intervals between their hours of going and coming he usually gave to some historical subject. Of the latter, "The Judgment of Solomon" was one on which he bestowed great pains. It met, however, with little approbation from the world; and, among his brethren, Fuseli was mercilessly sarcastic on the way in which the story was told. "How do you like my picture?" inquired the painter. "Oh, excellent well," was the reply; "the story is capitally told,—you have, indeed, suited the action to the word. Your Solomon holds out his fingers at the child like a pair of tailor's shears, and says, 'Cut it.'"[1] Nor was he much more successful with other works of a like nature drawn from profane sources. "The Marriage of Richard, brother of Edward the Fifth, to Lady Anne Mowbray," suffered in comparison with "Arthur and Hubert;" nor was his "Princess Bridget Plantagenet, fourth daughter of Edward IV., consigned to the care of the Abbess of Dartford," of superior effect. They were, in truth, formal compositions, deficient in grace and warmth. Of "The Burial of Christ," and "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes," I have no desire to speak; such subjects, unless embodied by a masterly hand, and dipt in such light and shade as Titian excelled in, had better remain in the original simplicity of the Scripture narrative. The latter picture was the last historical painting which the artist exhibited; this was in 1823: he was now seventy-seven years old.

During Northcote's brightest days, his fancy required excitement; the mercury of his imagination had to be raised to the height of history by artificial heat. His

[1] Fuseli's criticism of his painting of "The Angel opposing Balaam" has been already recorded (see page 88). These two painters were in truth far more opposed to each other than Opie and Northcote were, for they each had bitter tongues, and delighted to use them at each other's expense.—Ed.

pictures were the result of painful study and long-continued toil. He experienced none of those glowing visitations of the Muse of painting, when form, expression, and colour, come by something like inspiration. He drew, he touched and retouched, painted, and pondered, consulted all comers, and never seemed properly possessed with the sentiment of his subject. Now, instead of his hand acquiring ease and skill from time, the frosts of age seemed to benumb it; he touched the canvas with a cold and still a colder touch; his historical paintings became but the shadows of those he executed in his youthful days. This falling off, however, he was unwilling to perceive; his ambition to excel exceeded his powers; and he continued to paint while he found pleasure in the pursuit, and friends applauded. Some of the Scripture subjects of his latter days are heavy and spiritless; yet he imagined that what failed to please his brethren or satisfy the critics might do well enough for the devout; and accordingly, it was his practice to christen any rejected thing an altar-piece, and offer it to some churchwarden of the race that believe one piece of stained canvas to be as good as another. One of these productions found its way into the new church in Chelsea, where its extreme heaviness contrasts strangely with the light and graceful architecture around. The painter went on drawing and colouring to the last: critics, at length, respected his advanced age, and were silent or gentle; while some of his intimate friends saw virtues in the weaknesses of an artist who had amassed forty thousand pounds, and was without heirs.

During the latter years of Northcote's life he became acquainted with William Hazlitt, a man of many trades and many talents. He was originally a painter; then a lecturer, essayist, novelist, critic, and biographer;—moreover, he was known far and wide for the boldness of his opinions and the bitterness of his sarcasms. They soon became intimate. Hazlitt had great powers of pleasing, when he chose to exert them: he made himself acceptable to the painter by remarks on art; by his sly mode of touching on the characters of those for whom Northcote had no good will; and more particularly by asserting, in all com-

panies, that the venerable painter was the greatest wit of the age, and an oracle in art and literature. No one could be for ten minutes in Hazlitt's company without hearing allusions to Northcote's works, and references made to his opinions. Nor did he confine his admiration to mere speech: he noted down, or stored away in his memory, the sharpest of his remarks, and the most memorable of his sayings; and when his collection grew large, arranged them, and published them, in monthly sections, as Conversations between Northcote and himself, under the title of "Boswell Redivivus."[1] These papers attracted at the time a good deal of notice: the earliest dealt cautiously with names and works; but success rendered the writer bolder, and his Essays by and by discussed the merits of the living as well as of the dead with more force than delicacy. Northcote was aware of their publication, and, for a while, enjoyed the temporary *éclat* which they brought.

But the sayings of the painter, however amusing, were not those of one who weighed well his words and spoke from reflection. He had not a little of envy in his nature: he imagined that, in the race of reputation, he had been conquered more by stratagem and wile than speed of foot; and though he considered that the taste of the people was vulgar and depraved, he seemed not unwilling to resent, as a personal affront, all fame which eclipsed his own. As many excelled him in art, he found objects enow on whom he could direct the shafts of his satire. While he talked, he grew heated with a sense of his own worthiness, and handled the characters of others with a recklessness and ferocity unbecoming in one so old, and who had so much to thank the world for. He had acquired fame equal to his deservings, and fortune greater than he could enjoy; and yet he talked of want of discernment and patronage on the part of the public towards himself, though men, his superiors in genius, were unnoticed and could hardly find bread and water. He generally spoke

[1] Published in the "New Monthly Magazine" in 1826, and afterwards in a separate volume.—ED.

under the influence of excited feelings, and we may, therefore, repose but a moderate degree of trust in whatever he said. "It will never do," he said one day to Hazlitt, "to take things literally that are uttered in a moment of irritation. You do not express your own opinion, but one as opposite as possible to that of the person who has provoked you. You get as far from a person you have taken a pique against as you can, just as you turn off the pavement to get out of the way of a chimney-sweeper; but it is not to be supposed you prefer walking in the mud, for all that. I have often been ashamed, myself, of speeches I have made in that way, which have been repeated to me as good things, when all I meant was, that I would say anything sooner than agree to the nonsense or affectation I heard. You then set yourself against what you think a wrong bias in another, and are not like a wall, but a buttress, as far from the right line as your antagonist."

Personal as many of his diatribes are, or uttered in a spirit of spleen and contradiction, they nevertheless abound with opinions and remarks, showing much knowledge of human nature, and considerable taste in literature and art. It is true that the dexterous hand of Hazlitt trimmed them for the public eye, and gave force to the sarcasms and acrimony to the invectives; but though he put a little wormwood amid the painter's lavender, I cannot but regard most of the sentiments as those of Northcote. All, more or less, bear the impress of the man. I shall transcribe a few of these, in the words of "Boswell Redivivus:"—"Lord Byron, I am told," said he, "did not wish to be thought merely a great poet, he wished to be something different from everybody else. As to nobility, there were many others before him, so that he could not rely upon that; and then as to poetry, there are so many wretched creatures that pretend to the name, that he looked at it with disgust. He thought himself as distinct from them as the stars in the firmament. It comes to what Sir Joshua used to say, that a man who is at the head of his profession is above it." The first part of this is just, the rest erroneous. If Byron disliked to be thought a poet, because of so many wretched pretenders below him, he might have disliked to

be thought a man on the same principle, for the world abounds with two-legged creatures, grovelling and vile, who call themselves children of Adam. The painter is nearer the truth when he says, "The world in general, as Miss Reynolds used to say with reference to her brother, think no more of a painter than they do of a fiddler, or a dancing-master, or a maker of piano-fortes; and so of a poet. I have always said of that dispute, about burying Lord Byron in Poets' Corner, that he would have resisted it violently, could he have known of it. Not but that there were many very eminent names there with whom he would have liked to have associated; but then there were others that he would look down upon. If they had laid him there he would have got up again. I'll tell you where they should have laid him: if they had buried him with the kings in Henry VII.'s Chapel, he would have had no objection to that."

Northcote always seemed unable to appreciate the fine genius of Wordsworth: when Hazlitt said, that the great poet of the Lakes had added one original feature to our poetry, which Byron had not, the painter replied,—"Yes; but the little bit he has added is not enough. None but great objects can be seen at a distance. If posterity looked at it with your eyes, they might think his poetry curious and pretty; but consider how many Scotts, Byrons, and Johnsons there will be in the next hundred years; how many reputations will rise and sink in that time: and do you think, amid these conflicting and important claims, such trifles as descriptions of daisies and idiot boys will not be swept away in the tide of time, like straws and weeds by the torrent? No: the world can only keep in view the principal and most perfect works of human ingenuity;—such works that, from their unity, their completeness, their polish, have the stamp of immortality upon them, and seem indestructible, like an element of nature. I fear your friend Wordsworth is not one."

"I see," he observed to Hazlitt, "you place Scott above Byron. The question is, not which keeps longest on the wing, but which soars highest; and I cannot help thinking there are passages in Lord Byron which are not to be sur-

passed. All other modern poets appear vulgar in comparison. I agree, however, in your admiration of the Waverley novels: they are very fine. The author, like Cervantes, had raised the idea of human nature, not as Richardson has attempted it, by affectation and false varnish, but by bringing out what there is really fine in it, under a cloud of disadvantages. All that can be said against Sir Walter is, that he has never made a *whole*. There is an infinite number of delightful incidents and characters, but they are disjointed and scattered. This is one of Fielding's merits: his novels are regular compositions, with what the ancients called a beginning, a middle, and an end: every circumstance is foreseen and provided for; and the conclusion of the story turns round, as it were, to meet the beginning."

For the masters in art, Northcote seems to have had little reverence, particularly those who were English born. "Hogarth," he said, "does not lift us above ourselves: our curiosity may be gratified by seeing what men are, but our pride must be soothed with seeing them made better. Why else is "Paradise Lost" preferred to "Hudibras"? but because the one aggrandizes our notions of human nature, and the other degrades it. Who will make any comparison between a Madonna of Raphael and a drunken prostitute by Hogarth? Do we not feel more respect for an inspired apostle than for a blackguard in the streets? Raphael points out the highest perfection of which the human form and faculties are capable, and Hogarth their lowest degradation, or most wretched perversion. Look at his attempts to paint the good or beautiful, and see how faint the impressions of these were in his mind." The painter wilfully closed his eyes to the true light of the question. The object of Raphael was to bestow on the human figure a lustre of person, and a godlike elevation of mind. He desired to connect the spectator's thoughts with religion and heaven by the contemplation of what was beautiful and good. The object of Hogarth was to exhibit the hideousness of vice; to hold the burning light of his genius over the sinks of public infamy, and show men the purer way. The powers of Fuseli made little impression

on Northcote's mind; he only saw his extravagance: nor did he entertain a high opinion of his conversational talents. "There are few people," said he, "who can argue: Fuseli was not one of them. He could throw out brilliant and striking things; but if you at all questioned him, he could no more give an answer than a child three years old. He had no resources, nor any *corps de reserve* of argument, beyond his first line of battle; but that was imposing and glittering enough. Probably one ought not to expect two things together; for to produce a startling and immediate effect, one must keep pretty much upon the surface, and the search after truth is a slow and obscure process."

Among the early friends of Northcote, the Mudges were the most distinguished; and it was generally supposed that he entertained a high regard for a family which produced men of genius and science, as well as generosity. To Zachary Mudge, Reynolds himself is supposed to have been indebted for aid in his discourses, as well as for acts of kindness when he commenced his career; he looked on all his friend said to be law, both in taste and morals: any question that Mudge settled, he considered as settled beyond dispute; and from him he borrowed his favourite maxim in painting,—"True beauty is the medium of form." Northcote was still deeper in debt to the Mudges than his master: by them his works had been introduced to the world, and himself to Reynolds; and, in his better moods, he had no objection to remember all these things, and speak of them thankfully. But in one of his sarcastic fits, when a sense of other men's fame was strong upon him, it was his pleasure to speak of the elder Mudge not only with less reverence than his worth and learning merited, but in a style harsh and acrimonious. All this, and perhaps more, was told to the world in the "Conversations," by Hazlitt. This produced a remonstrance, and then a visit, from Mr. Rosdew, of Plymouth, who married a grand-daughter of the Mudge whose memory had been attacked. On being expostulated with, "he broke out," —I quote the words of Rosdew—"into the most violent expressions of rage and passion. He called Hazlitt an

assassin, a wretch, a viper, whom he would stab if he could get at him. He said, when he first read the article he thought for three days it would have killed him: in short, he said so much, and so warmly, that I pitied him, and left him with as warm feelings of regard as before; considering, as he declared, that his words had been misrepresented, and feeling what he had said in the 'Life of Reynolds,' and elsewhere, about the family."

The remonstrance of Rosdew induced Northcote to write an earnest letter to Campbell the poet, at that time editor of the magazine in which the Conversations were published:—"I have been informed," says our painter, "that you are a principal director of 'The New Monthly Magazine;' and if you are, I must be excused for making my complaint. I find there are frequently papers in this publication, entitled, *very modestly*, 'Boswell Redivivus,' insinuating that the hero of this trivial stuff is be compared to the immortal Dr. Johnson. This person seems pretty clearly to be made out to be myself. Good God! do you not feel this to be dreadful? But this is not the worst of the matter. I have often, in my vain moments, said that I should be pleased to receive morning visits at times from the devil, because I might be amused by his knowledge of the world, and diverted by his wit, and should be sufficiently on my guard to avoid his snares. This impious desire has indeed been granted unto me, and 'Boswell Redivivus' is the consequence.

"You will scarcely pity a calamity which my presumption has brought upon myself. I have at those times, in the closet, indulged in idle conversation, not knowing who I was with, in all the confidence of friendship. I thought no more of what was said by either of us afterwards, concluding that it had passed off in air; but I now find to my sorrow, that this despicable and worthless trash has been treasured up, and is proclaimed at the market cross, where my family connections and dearest friends are brought forward to public inspection, with their names at full length, properly spelt, in order to prevent any possible mistake being made; and things uttered in idle merriment now stamped in everlasting print, not as I represented

them, but as speeches of cold, dry, and hateful malignity, and grossly different from my meaning; and I am now kept in perpetual torture, not knowing what each new month may bring forth. Good God! do you not think such a situation terrible?

"I have been told that these detestable papers have been thought amusing. I do not wonder at that,—the world delights in mischief, and a sufferer is always gratifying as an object of triumph. But I hope you will not calmly see me sacrificed or ruined: you can have no reason for cruelty towards me: I have never injured or done harm to you; and surely, as a moralist, you ought not to sow discord and propagate hatred in families, or between friends, and make them detest each other, and all for a little profit, or a little fun. If you go on in this manner, you will drive me to distraction, and bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, by being in league with a wretch who has betrayed me, and who is gone to France to escape the vengeance of those he has injured."

This letter, written in the year 1827, is sufficiently strong regarding Northcote's detestation of Hazlitt: there are brave words in the way of loathing and scorn in it; nor is the answer of Campbell calculated to screen his correspondent from the vengeance of the artist. "I am afflicted beyond measure," says the poet, "at finding my own inattention to have been the means of wounding the feelings of a venerable man of genius. Dictate the form and manner of my attempting to atone for having unconsciously injured you, if I can make you any atonement. The *infernal* Hazlitt shall never more be permitted to write for the 'New Monthly.' I mean not to palliate my own want of watchfulness over the magazine, which has occasioned such a paper being admitted; I only tell you the honest truth, that a crisis in my affairs, which is never likely to occur again, fatally tempted me, this last month, to trust the revision of some part of the number to the care and delicacy of another person; that person has, like myself, slept over his charge. I am willing to acknowledge to you publicly, that oversight, and not intention, produced the insertion of this obnoxious matter.

In the meantime, suffer me to say, without meaning to retract my apology to you, that I think you somewhat forget the ancient and firm hold which you possess over public esteem, when you attach so much importance to this misrepresentation of your opinions and conversation. In reality, as I deserve to be punished for the paper, so I believe that I suffer more in the public opinion from it than you do. At all events, be assured, that if Hazlitt attempts to report your conversations, he must break out in a new quarter."

To this letter Northcote returned the following answer: —"My good Sir, I am very much obliged by your exceeding kind letter, which was heart's ease to me, and should have answered sooner, but that I could not determine on what was best for me to do. Your kind interference has greatly relieved me, and I think nothing more can be done for my good. The mischief is already complete, and I must patiently suffer the consequences. My only remedy now must depend upon my profound silence; and I have only to beg of you that my name, as having interfered in any way respecting those, to me, awful papers, may never be mentioned in your magazine, because it would be avowing a connection with them which I wish to avoid."

To set himself right with Rosdew was the next step of the painter. He copied the letters, and adding the following, forwarded the whole to Plymouth, 17th August, 1827:— "Dear Sir, I have sent you exact copies of the letters which passed at an early period of the publication between myself and Mr. Campbell, to prove to you how much those hateful papers annoyed me; but I hope it is now entirely put a stop to, and that I shall be left at rest."

The friends of Northcote were pleased at this intrepid conduct, and felt persuaded that his conversations had been misrepresented. They saw, in the stern language which he had applied to Hazlitt, an assurance of all companionship being broken up between them, and that the latter would never more be permitted to be a visitor in Argyll Place. Yet some of the painter's more penetrating acquaintances doubted his perfect sincerity in the whole affair; and one or two even went so far as to say, that the

Hazlitt who had been reviled as papist, wretch, viper, and the representative of Satan on earth, was the bosom friend of Northcote still, and might be found, during the evenings, aiding the old man to while away the hours in the composition of fables, essays, and bits of biography. That Northcote had not been seriously averse to the publication of his conversations was perfectly well known: he coveted the notoriety which they brought, but disliked the controversies in which they involved him. It was his custom after this to say, when more than usually communicative, to a visitor, "Now, sir, don't print what I have said to you." All this outward show did not long conceal from Rosdew that the painter had imposed on him with well simulated anger, and cleverly acted distress. He learnt, to his surprise, that Hazlitt, so far from being in danger of a stab from the man whom he had betrayed and misrepresented, was his familiar visitor, and had moreover found a place in his will. He could not trust his own feelings in writing a letter on this topic, and the task was undertaken by a mutual friend of both, Mr. Dunsterville, whose remonstrance brought the following reply from the painter:—"I have just received your unkind letter, which surprised me; a letter which I would not have condescended to answer, had it not come from you, an old, kind friend. As I know the natural goodness of your disposition, it is my opinion that you have some person who works upon you, in hope to produce an enmity between us. You threaten me with more thundering letters, which, if they come, I shall throw into the fire unanswered. It is impossible for me to explain this nonsense, therefore pray torment me no more, as, at present, my great age and load of infirmities render me unfit for such silly matters. The only part of your letter which gave me pleasure was to find that you were in the enjoyment of good health, by the goodness of your writing, and the spirit shown in your willingness to fight in single combat; but as that is not my case at present, I beg leave to decline the challenge."

This explanation was so little to the satisfaction of Mr. Rosdew, that he turned the painter's portrait out of his

collection, where it had long hung, among other heads of the worthies of Devon by the hand of Reynolds. On hearing this, Northcote wrote the following singular letter to Mr. Dunsterville:—"I am sorry to find that Mr. Rosdew cannot forget the chance blow that has been given to his relative. I have no objection to his dismissal of my picture out of his sight, if it has any tendency to move his passion. Greater, wiser, and better men than I can pretend to be, have had their portraits treated with the greatest indignities; but the only way to make it safe would be to destroy it, lest, in some future time, another possessor, of a different mind, may again take it into favour. Mr. Rosdew does not seem to know the situation of those who are by circumstances exposed to the notice or criticisms of the public, and are obliged, by necessity, to be on civil terms with those whom in their hearts they hate, such as newspaper conductors and their assistants, or else they may torment you to death,—and no rank or station is out of their power. Even the King cannot escape; but ministers of state, noble persons, authors, painters, players, musicians, are their common game,—and no morning passes but newspapers make many hearts ache. I never sought the acquaintance of Mr. Hazlitt in my life; but I do not know how to get rid of him without personally affronting him, which would draw his *vengeance* upon me;—self-preservation is the first law of nature, and I am not much to blame in availing myself of it. When the error was committed, I was ignorant of his disposition. I have now nothing more to do, but to be very cautious not to communicate any matter for him to repeat, and yet not to make him hate me; and of two evils, it is better to have my portrait treated with contempt, than to forbid him my house, and draw his vengeance on my head. I remember a wise remark of Gainsborough the painter, who used to say, that nothing was so easy as to make acquaintances, but it was often a devil of a task to get rid of them. Although that which Hazlitt said of old Mr. Mudge struck deeply into my heart, yet Hazlitt has given me many a painful thought on other matters; therefore I cannot but admire the grateful attachment which Mr.

Rosdew's conduct shows towards a family so full of virtue and genius as that of the Mudges, which proves the purity and goodness of his own heart; and if he thinks I have done wrong, I must forgive his resentment for the beauty of the motive." This letter terminated the correspondence respecting the Conversations; and Mr. Rosdew bade the matter farewell, in these severe words:—"Ingratitude, envy, meanness, and inordinate self-conceit, together with falsehood, have marked the painter's conduct respecting the Mudges. To these I may add extreme vanity; to gratify which he would sacrifice anything—not excepting his money!"

No one can say that Northcote came out of this sharp controversy free from blame. If he looked on Hazlitt as having abused his confidence, or as really meriting any of the hard epithets he had showered on him to a third person, he ought to have forbidden the man his house. But in truth, if Northcote had stood in such dread of Hazlitt as his last letter represents, he would not have written with such freedom about him to men who read his letters publicly. The complaint addressed to Campbell was as likely to kindle the indignation of such a man as Hazlitt, as forbidding him his house. In fact, another reason, than fear of the consequences, influenced the mind of the painter: all the time this fierce controversy was raging, Hazlitt was busy arranging for Northcote his "One Hundred Fables, original and select," which were published in the following year; preparing a second volume, not yet published, of similar compositions; and taking notes, and making memorandums, for the work called "Titian and his Times," which appeared in the year 1830. Our artist was old and feeble: he daily tottered into his painting-room, and with his palette on his thumb, and a canvas before him, painted, or seemed to paint; looking all the while for the dropping in of friends, that he might be cheered with talk about art and literature, or the rise and fall of stocks. When it was imagined he had set his house in order, and resigned all thought of further labours, out came the volume of "Fables," illustrated, after the manner of Bewick, with designs chiefly

from his own hand. Of his apologues, it may be said that they are generally judicious, and easily comprehended; that the language is plain and simple, the morals well drawn, and applicable to life; but that they are nearly all deficient in originality. Those related in verse are less natural and easy than the others. The accompanying designs are much more creditable to Northcote. Some of them are elegant alike in conception and execution. I cannot say, however, that any of them leave the impression of great power.[1]

There is some sharp satire and good criticism scattered about the fables; *e. g.*—"A glow-worm, well knowing that he was admired for his extraordinary splendour whenever he made his appearance on a dark evening, grew exceedingly proud and conceited upon the notice that was taken of him, and could not rest contented in his humble retreat in a hedge, among the insects his neighbours, but burned with inward fire to come forward and display himself in bright daylight to a gazing crowd of admirers, more discerning and more numerous than in the gloom of night; and, accordingly, having placed himself in a most conspicuous situation, he had the mortification of being informed that his beauties were not of so sterling a quality as to bear a close inspection, for thus exposed in sunshine

[1] It is stated by the editor of the second edition of the "Fables," that it was by "a curious process that Mr. Northcote really made the designs for these 'Fables.' Though he had decided talent as a draughtsman, he rarely made use of it in this undertaking. His general practice was to collect great numbers of prints of animals, and to cut out such as he wanted, moving those he selected about on a piece of paper until he had illustrated the fable by placing them to his satisfaction, and had thus composed his subject; then fixing the different figures with paste to the paper, a few pen and ink or pencil touches rendered this singular composition complete enough to place in the hands of Mr. Harvey, by whom it was adapted or freely translated on to the block for the engravers." Messrs. Redgrave do not believe in this story, considering Northcote's skill in animal drawing would not have reduced him to such a contrivance; but it is so like his way of proceeding, that it seems to me most likely to be true. Allan Cunningham did not know of this practice when he wrote the above criticism, the second edition of the "Fables" not having then appeared. "I well remember," writes his son, "the amused delight with which he read aloud the passage quoted, and the regret he expressed at not having seen it before he wrote his "Life."—Ed.

he appeared to be a mere grub. There are too many," says the moral, "who appear very excellent when in an humble station of life, but are found very ill qualified to move in a sphere more lofty and splendid. As we become more exalted in our stations, we become more the immediate objects of criticism, and subject to the shafts of envy: as our power is increased, and our field of action is enlarged, our task becomes doubly difficult to escape doing wrong; and those follies which would pass unnoticed in an obscure station, when practised by the great are exposed to all eyes, and meet with universal condemnation." To this fable the artist has added a riotous scene, where loud laughter and excessive drinking abound, in the midst of which a minstrel is wasting the sweetness of his music and the melody of his voice on the careless and the profligate. The construction of the fable is faulty. The glow-worm in desiring a place of distinction during the day, exposed herself to contempt, if you will, or pity, but not to envy.

Northcote had doubtless suffered in his day from the pertness and snip-snap criticisms of connoisseurs, and it is thus he seeks to repay them.—"A bee, flying out of his hive, said to a cuckoo, who was chanting on a bush hard by,—'Peace! why don't you leave off your harsh monotonous pipe? There never was a bird who had such a tiresome unvaried song as you have. Cuckoo, cuckoo, and cuckoo, again and again.'—'Oh!' cries the cuckoo, 'I wonder you find fault with my note, which is at least as much varied as your labours; for if you had a hundred hives to fill, you would make them all exactly alike; if I invent nothing new, surely everything you do is as old as the creation of the world.' To which the bee replied,—'I allow it; but in useful arts the want of variety is never an objection; while in works of taste and amusement, monotony is of all things to be avoided.' The cuckoo is a good representative of our pretended connoisseurs, who, not having the capacity to judge of works of art or taste, expose themselves to ridicule when they assume the critic, and appear equally impertinent both in their censure and their praise."

Of the author's claim to originality the fable of the "Trooper" may be taken as a specimen. "As a trooper was dressing his horse, he noticed that one of the shoe-nails had dropped out; yet he postponed for the present sticking in another nail. Soon after, he was summoned by sound of trumpet to join his corps, who were commanded to advance rapidly and charge the enemy. In the heat of the action the loose shoe fell off; his horse became lame, stumbled, and threw his rider to the ground, who was immediately slain by the enemy. A well-known proverb warns us never to leave that to be done to-morrow, which may be done to-day; but the foregoing apologue shows that even an hour's delay of a business seemingly trivial, occasioned death." How much better this is told by Dr. Franklin. "For want of a nail the shoe was lost, for want of a shoe the horse was lost, for want of a horse the rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by the enemy, all for want of care about a horse-shoe nail." Nor is the language helped much by the pencil: the horse is falling on its knees, and the rider tumbles off behind, instead of plunging forward as the action of the horse requires. Of these fables the author says,—"It may be expected that I should say something respecting my motives for the present undertaking. I have only to observe, that a chief inducement in making the collection was the amusement and employment it afforded me, in the way of my profession as a painter, in sketching designs for each fable. I am, therefore, the less anxious about what may be said by critics on the literary part of the work. They will quickly perceive it has been gathered from various sources: the greater portion are of my own invention." Those which he claimed as his own are marked with his initials, or his name in full. The work was well received, and went speedily to a second edition. All that Hazlitt says about his share in the volume is this: —"I went to Northcote in the evening, to consult about his fables."

The fame which the fables brought encouraged him to announce "Titian and his Times;" a work which raised high expectations. That nobody but an artist could write

the life of one, was an old maxim of his—but this he seems now to have abandoned. He employed Hazlitt on this new speculation. Now, though Hazlitt had in early life made an attempt at painting, the productions of his pencil were, by universal admission, the lowest of the low: Northcote, therefore, could not be of opinion that a painter held the pen. He probably believed all was so secret that the world would never know who the master spirit was that presided over the work: even the controversy about the "Conversations" served to conceal the true author; and when "Titian and his Times" appeared, the critics praised the vigorous mind and ready hand of one fourscore years old and odd, and his brethren in art talked of the genius of Northcote, which flashed but the stronger the more his body failed.

On looking into the work, it appears the composition of one who knew Italy more from report than inspection; and whose opinions and remarks are in general picked out of the current stock which circulates in the world. The author is not only bold and free regarding the merits of the illustrious artists of the land, but perilously rash in his assertions about the merits of some of the eminent writers of Italy. This was too much for one whose education never reached the extent of his native Grammar; and who knew as little about the great modern poets and writers of Italy, in their native tongue, as he knew of Homer and Virgil in theirs. The work, too, has a flow of language quite different from the dry-as-dust style in which the "Life of Reynolds" is written. I am inclined, however, to ascribe the choice of the subject to *Northcote:* Titian lived to a great age, painted portrait and history, excelled in colouring, and loved to appear in a green velvet cap ornamented with gold. Northcote lived to a great age, painted portrait and history, imagined that he imitated Titian in colouring, and loved to sit in a green velvet cap, like the illustrious Venetian. "I found him one day," says Hazlitt, "painting a portrait of himself. Another stood on an easel. He asked me which I thought most like: I said, 'The one you are about is the best, but not good enough. It looks like a physician, or a member

of parliament; but it ought to look like something more —a cardinal, or a Spanish inquisitor.' While I spoke, I was constantly in danger of oversetting a stand with a small looking-glass, which Northcote particularly cautioned me not to touch. Every now and then he was prying into the glass by stealth, to see if the portrait was like. He had on a green velvet cap, and looked very like Titian."

In a work written by the hand of another, it is difficult to pick out passages bearing the impress of the person who furnished the rough materials, and supplied such remarks as the subject naturally called forth. The following passage owes little, perhaps, to Hazlitt:—"I will in this place venture to give my opinion, that there is no way so improving to a student as to finish his pictures to the utmost minuteness in his power; by which means he will acquire a thorough knowledge of the exact forms and characters of the parts. If he has a genius for the art, he will soon discover what he may treat slightly, or leave out of his work; and if he has none, he will be enabled by this method to give such an air of truth to his productions as will pass for merit with a large part of the community, by which he will be secure of employment, and will also have a certain claim to respect."

There is much truth in the accusation which Northcote brings against Britain, for want of a true feeling in what is noble and imaginative in art:—"Except in the department of portraiture, the art of painting in England has been obstructed or disregarded, unless during some happier intervals when the goddess of taste has paid a short visit to the great. Otherwise art has been in small estimation, except the artist was foreign. In Italy, even every province contends for the precedence of its school against that of all others; whilst the Englishman is pleased with every thing that is not the production of England. Our neighbours, the French, have spoken contemptuously of us without reserve; and the few English who have undisputedly excelled, were scarcely rewarded with the honest and impartial approbation of their own countrymen." I perceive the mind and taste of Northcote impressed on

many passages in these volumes:—"The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau."

Northcote, amid these literary toils, did not wholly forsake his easel: his chief labours were in portraiture. In the last fifteen years of his life, he painted some sixty heads; of which one of the most remarkable was a portrait of Sir Walter Scott, for Sir William Knighton. The painter said he had a threefold spell upon him while the poet sat: first, he had the highest admiration of the illustrious author of Waverley; secondly, he loved Sir William Knighton as a true friend and an ardent Devonian; thirdly, he had his own name and fame to look to: and worked, therefore, as he imagined, under a sort of triple inspiration. He might have learnt, however, from the great master of song who sat to him, that feelings such as these are more likely to impede than inspire: the ancient minstrel, before the lovely and the far descended, felt that

> "His hand had lost that sprightly ease
> Which marks security to please;"

and it has been averred that something of this timidity is visible in the picture of Sir Walter. The conception is nevertheless good; to secure the appearance of life and reality, or to unite his own name more effectually with that of Scott, the artist put on his Titian cap of velvet, and represented himself in his painting-room, palette in hand, putting the finishing touch to the head of the poet. The likenesses are both good; and Northcote was so pleased with his success, that he commenced making a copy with some alterations.[1]

Concerning Scott, the painter confided his opinions to

[1] Sir Walter Scott records his impression of Northcote in his diary. He says:—"May 9, 1828. This day, at the request of Sir William Knighton, I sat to Northcote, who is to introduce himself in the same piece in the act of painting me, like some pictures of the Venetian school. The artist is an old man, low in stature and bent with years—fourscore at least. But his eye is quick, and his countenance noble. A pleasant companion, familiar with recollections of Sir Joshua, Samuel Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith, &c. His account of the last confirms all we have heard of his oddities. May 11. Another long sitting to the old wizard Northcote. He really resembles an animated mummy."—Ed.

Hazlitt. "Sir Walter," said he, "would have stood his ground in any company; neither Burke, nor Johnson, nor any of their admirers, would have been disposed or able to set aside his pretensions. These men were not looked upon in their day as at present. I liked Sir Walter, because he had an easy, unaffected manner, and was ready to converse on all subjects. If, on the contrary, he had been stiff and pedantic, I should, perhaps, have been inclined to think less highly of the author, from not liking the man. We can never judge fairly of men's abilities, till we are no longer liable to come in contact with their persons. I was much pleased with him, and I believe he expressed a favourable opinion of me. I said to him,—'I admire the way in which you begin your novels; you set out so abruptly, that you quite surprise me; I can't at all tell what's coming.'—'No,' says Sir Walter, 'nor I neither.' I then told him, that when I first read Waverley, I said it was no novel; nobody could invent like that; either he had heard the story related by one of the surviving parties, or he had found the materials in a manuscript concealed in some old chest. To which he replied, —'You're not so far out of the way in thinking so.' You don't know Scott, do you? He'd be a pattern to you; you would learn to rub off some of your asperities; but you admire him, I believe."—"Yes," answered Hazlitt, "on this side of idolatry and Toryism: there are two things I admire in Sir Walter,—his capacity and his simplicity. When he was in Paris, and went to Galignani's, he sat down in an outer room to look at some book he wanted to see: none of the clerks had the least suspicion who it was; when it was found out, the place was in commotion. Cooper, the American, was in Paris at the time; his looks and manner seemed to announce a much greater man; he strutted through the streets with a consequential air, as if he never relaxed in the assumption, nor wished it to be forgotten by others, that he was the American Sir Walter Scott: the real one never troubled himself about the matter."

At the last sitting which the poet gave the painter, the conversation turned on the numerous portraits of the

novelist. "You have often sat for your portrait," said Northcote. "Yes," said Sir Walter, "my dog Maida and I have sat frequently,—so often, that Maida, who had little philosophy, conceived such a dislike to painters, that whenever she saw a man take out a pencil and paper, and look at her, she set up a howl, and ran off to the Eildon Hill: her unfortunate master, however well he can howl, was never able to run much; he was, therefore, obliged to abide the event: yes, I have frequently sat for my picture."

Anecdotes of Northcote and his sitters are numerous. At the time when the young Roscius passed for a Garrick and a Kemble in one, and nightly witnessed "the slope of wet faces from the pit to the roof," he sat to our painter. That no honour might be wanting, he was conveyed by the Duke of Clarence, afterwards William IV., to Argyll Place, in his own carriage, where lords and ladies not a few usually assembled to see the progress of the work. The painter himself was, probably, to his Royal Highness, not the least object of curiosity. "The loose gown," says one of his biographers, "in which he painted was principally composed of shreds and patches, and might, perchance, be half a century old; his white hair was sparingly bestowed on each side, and his cranium was entirely bald. The royal visitor, standing behind him whilst he painted, first gently lifted, or rather twitched, the collar of the gown; which Northcote resented by suddenly turning, and expressing his displeasure by a frown; on which his Royal Highness, touching the professor's grey locks, said,—'You don't devote much time to the toilette, I perceive.' The painter instantly replied,—'Sir, I never allow anyone to take personal liberties with me: you are the first who ever presumed to do so; and I beg your Royal Highness to recollect that I am in my own house.' The artist resumed his painting; the prince stood silent for a minute or so, then opened the door and went away. The royal carriage, however, had not arrived, and rain was falling; the prince returned, borrowed an umbrella, and departed. 'Dear Mr. Northcote,' said one of the ladies, 'I fear you have offended his Royal Highness.'—'Madam,' said the

painter, 'I am the offended party.' The next day, about noon, Mr. Northcote was alone, when a gentle tap was heard, the studio door opened, and in walked the prince. 'Mr. Northcote,' he said, 'I am come to return your sister's umbrella: I brought it myself, that I might have an opportunity of saying that yesterday I thoughtlessly took an unbecoming liberty with you, which you properly resented. I really am angry with myself, and hope you will forgive me, and think no more of it.'—'And what did you say?' inquired a friend to whom the painter told the story. 'Say;—good God! what could I say? I only bowed,—he might see what I felt. I could, at that moment, have sacrificed my life for him;—such a prince is worthy to be a king.' The prince afterwards, in his maritime way, said 'He's a damned honest, independent, little old fellow.'"

Northcote painted Whitbread, and on that occasion made what he often called a lucky escape. A share in the theatre, when old Drury had arisen out of her dust and ashes, was considered a safe and even lucrative thing. This was proposed to our artist accordingly; but he, in a somewhat snappish discussion, refused to become one of the proprietary. "No," said he, years afterwards, "I was not to be fooled in that way. What! squander upon mock kings and queens—upon Punch—the pittance which I had saved during the labour of a long life, to keep my sister and myself from starving in our old age! No, no," he added, in his own shrewd style: "no—this is the penalty of holding conversations, and being on familiar terms, with great people. An artist may honour them as patrons: but to imagine that he can hold communion with them, on a footing of friendship, is a moral misdemeanour, for which we ought to be soundly whipped."

In the year 1830, Northcote gave up both his pencil and his pen; and composed himself quietly for that dissolution, which he now felt could not be far distant. He complained that life lingered about his body too long, and said it was like keeping the lamps lighted in a church after the congregation had left it. He prepared his will: and of his numerous friends few were forgotten. To a female

domestic, who had served him faithfully, he gave a thousand pounds, though she had long left him. To insure the publication of a second volume of his fables, he left three thousand pounds; and for a monument to himself he bequeathed a thousand, with instructions that it should be executed by Chantrey, with whom he had always lived on friendly terms. He now thought he had done his duty, and wished for repose; but repose was denied him. The Conversations, which had vexed him for two years in their magazine shape, were announced to be printed in a volume. This brought a letter of remonstrance from the anxious Rosdew, and a threat to publish the correspondence which had passed on the subject between the painter and Campbell. "It is my most earnest wish and desire," said Northcote, "that you will make public my letter to Mr. Campbell, as that would, in some degree, explain the truth, and check the progress of those *cursed* papers, which have cost me so many hours of agony, and which I have not been able to suppress with all my endeavours. I wish you had lent me your assistance sooner: it might have been of use." This letter is dated July 21, 1830. The "Conversations" made their appearance in a collected form; but the passages which reflected on Dr. Zachary Mudge were softened or omitted. The death-bed sickness of Hazlitt was, perhaps, no obstacle in the way of these amputations. He had been ailing for some time, and suffering both from ill health and want: he was in extreme distress: his only son, though possessed of talent, was too young to aid him; and Northcote, who had abundance, seems to have shut his heart. The painter had put him down for an hundred pounds in his will: Hazlitt died on the 18th of September, and the money—a paltry sum, surely, for one who had rendered so much assistance—was bequeathed elsewhere. With Hazlitt, we may say the voice ceased which had for years principally kept the world in mind of Northcote's existence. The latter had prayed to be delivered from his friend; but now, when death sundered them, it is likely that he felt the loss of one whose ready wit and lively conversation gave wings to many an otherwise heavy hour.

Northcote lived till the 13th day of July, 1831, and then died, so calmly, that he seemed to sleep life away. He was buried in the vault under the new church of St. Mary-le-bone, near Cosway.

"'Talking with the painter,' said Hazlitt, 'is like conversing with the dead. You see a little old man, eighty years of age, pale and fragile, with eyes gleaming like the lights hung in tombs. He seems little better than a ghost, and hangs wavering and trembling on the very edge of life. You would think a breath would blow him away, and yet what fine things he says.'—'Yes!' observed some one, 'and what ill-natured things; they are malicious to the last word. He is a bottle of aquafortis, which corrodes everything it touches.'—'Except gold,' said Hazlitt; 'he never drops upon Sir Joshua or the great masters.'—'Well; but is he not flowing over,' persisted the other, 'with envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness? He is as spiteful as a woman; and then, his niggardness. Did he ever give anything?'—'Yes; his advice,' said Hazlitt, 'and very unpleasant it is.'" This is the picture of an ungracious sort of man; and yet our painter was not without his mild and gentle moments; nay, he had them frequently. He was pleased to talk with ladies, yet he never was in love; he considered them as wasters of time and of money. He was abstemious by nature: he had to carry on no warfare with passions wild and strong: he had, by rote, all the old saws which make frugality a virtue; and love of saving, and of long life, united to persuade him that one half of mankind die in youth from intemperance. This he not only believed himself, but his maiden sister believed in it also; and as the latter had the furnishing of the table, she spread it so sparingly, that visitors who accidentally dropped in at meal-time marvelled how they survived such continued self-denial. He was mean in his apparel: his house seemed the abode of a sloven or a niggard; and in his conversation he hovered between the satirist and the miser.

The Prince of Wales, when a young man, met the painter, and was much pleased with his conversation. "What do you know of his Royal Highness?" inquired Sir Joshua. "Nothing," answered Northcote. "Nothing, sir! why, he

says he knows you very well."—"Pooh!" said Northcote, "that is only his brag." The president smiled and muttered,—"Bravely said, bravely said."

He prided himself on his foresight; and it was one of his maxims to leave little to chance, and less to friendship. He committed as much of his fame as he could to the durability of marble and the genius of Chantrey; but he resolved to trust no one with his life and character; and towards the close of his days wrote a copious memoir of himself, and put it into the hands of a friend, with the formal request that he would see it published after his death.[1] He bore in mind how little either Burke or Boswell had fulfilled the hopes of Reynolds, when he left them legacies and pictures; and probably thought, in writing his own life, he carried economy farther than ever his great master had contemplated. Northcote, nevertheless, was, least of all men, to be trusted with such a work. He seldom made a calm estimate or took a dispassionate view of anything; he dipped all subjects, save his historical pictures, in the light of heaven or the darkness of hell; with him, in the morning a man was all that was good and great; in the afternoon he was a cheat and a swindler. His opinion of himself was, perhaps, not liable to such fluctuations; but the man who cannot make a fair estimate of the merits of others cannot be expected to be just to his own. His life was an almost continued aggression against mankind—artists in particular: his conversation was a controversy, sometimes mild and tolerant, but often violent and rancorous: and all that he said, and perhaps much

[1] This friend would seem to have been Sir William Knighton, for, in that gentleman's diary, it is recorded: "Paid a visit to Mr. Northcote, and had a long talk with him about his Life, which I hope to write and arrange for him. He is anxious that I should do so, but seems to doubt my having the time to accomplish it. I surprised him with how much I remembered concerning him. He is in wonderful force for the age of eighty-five. . . . . Northcote thanked God that he had outlived Opie, Fuseli, and Wolcot, they would have made pretty trash of his life; 'but,' he added, 'I think in your hands I am safe.'" This memoir is stated to have been really edited by Sir William Knighton, but I cannot find that it was ever published, unless it was that prefixed to the second edition of the "Fables."—ED.

that he wrote, required to be taken with some abatement.

Of his system of study and habits as an artist, a little may be said. He was an early riser; remained long at his easel; sought models in all things to aid his conception; and was long in pleasing himself with his outline or his colours. He attained all by a slow, protracted and laborious process. He seemed never to see clearly what he desired to do; and worked more from artificial rules than from the fulness and energy of nature. When he commenced an historical picture, it was his practice to crowd his studio with all manner of costumes and weapons, and matters which belonged to the era he wished to illustrate. These he painted in brightly enough; but the human character and sentiment which had to give life and feeling to the whole, could not be found without outlay of imagination; and Northcote complained that he could neither find in life or fancy such heads as he desired. He liked to have friends beside him when he painted. Work never interrupted the flow of conversation; he could talk and paint, argue and paint, criticize and paint: with him, in fact, painting was much of a mechanical process.

Northcote's uninspired industry has added nothing, which promises to last, to our stock of literature. An essay, in which he illustrates, with some ingenuity, the untenable position of Barry, that poetry is only true when it can be painted, he considered, he told me, the cleverest thing he had ever written. He was not one of those who believed, with Spenser,

> "That poets' wit surpasseth painters' far,
> In picturing the parts of beauty daynt."

Of his merits as a painter, I have already said much in the course of my narrative. His chief excellence lay in a certain dignity with which he invested his compositions. He desired to exalt all he touched; and this is true of his portraits as well as of his historical pieces. The clear manner in which he makes his canvas tell his story is another merit of a high order; this made the pictures he painted for the Shakespeare Gallery more popular than the

more imaginative works of Fuseli. His chief faults were defective drawing, dull colouring, and that want of pictorial conception which gives to his works the appearance of having come bit by bit, and with reluctance, from his mind. In his best works there is little to surprise, elevate, or electrify.

END OF VOL. II.

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